

## Ciller aide resigns from Turkish cabinet in protest at Islamists

ANKARA (AFP) — Tourism Minister Bahattin Uzel, a former close aide to Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller, resigned from the Turkish government Friday in protest at his True Path Party's continued alliance with the Islamists. "I step down as I don't think it is appropriate to remain in government with (Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's pro-Islamic) Welfare Party," Mr. Uzel told a news conference here. But he said he would not resign from Mrs. Ciller's conservative True Path Party.

# Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation  
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الراي

## Yemeni airline pilots, engineers on strike

SANAA (AFP) — Some 160 Yemenia airline pilots and flight engineers began a partial strike Thursday to obtain pay increases, the Pilots' Union said. The strikers are demanding "a salary increase and better working conditions," a union official, who asked not to be identified, told AFP. He said the strikers were going to "stop work every day from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. until their demands are met completely." Yemenia pilots went on strike June 3 for 12 hours to get management promises concerning their demands. The average salary of pilots in Yemen, one of the world's poorest countries, is 62,000 Yemeni rials (\$520) a month. The airline has 15 aircraft, including Boeing 737s, Boeing 727s, Airbus A310s and Airbus A300s.

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## Vagrants, beggars riot in Sudan prison yard: police

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Police Thursday dispersed with tear gas a riot staged by vagrants and beggars who had been rounded up and held in the yard of a Khartoum prison, a police spokesman said. Maj. Gen. Al Zubair Ibrahim Al Zubair said in a statement that the detainees had been throwing stones at passers-by and at policemen stationed outside the prison, apparently protesting at being held overnight. Others had climbed the wall in an attempt to escape. He said that Khartoum state authorities had rounded up an unspecified number of vagrants and beggars from the streets and taken them to the prison where "they would be sorted out by social workers and psychiatrists," Gen. Zubair said that police managed to "fully contain the situation and disperse the rioters, using tear gas." "No serious injuries have occurred among the rioters," he said, adding that "none of the inmates inside the prison took part in the riots." Gen. Zubair attributed the incidents to "the presence, among the vagrants and beggars, of criminals" who "exploited the gathering for staging the riots."

## Egyptian defence minister to visit France, Greece

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian Defence Minister Mohammad Hussein Tantawi will begin an official visit to Paris Sunday followed by an official visit to Athens to strengthen military cooperation with both countries. The Egyptian news agency MENA said Friday that Mr. Tantawi's visit to France comes at the invitation of his French counterpart, Alain Richard. The two men will discuss "increasing bilateral military cooperation after the investiture of the new French government."

## Netanyahu cancels meeting with Clinton

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu cancelled a trip to the U.S. Friday to avoid a difficult meeting with President Bill Clinton. Israeli television reported. The trip was scheduled for the last week in June. The official reason given for the cancellation was that Mr. Netanyahu decided to remain in Israel to deal with the conversion law, a highly controversial issue affecting Israel's relations with Jews in the U.S. and other countries. However, Channel 2 television said the real reason lay in the low point to which the peace process with the Palestinians had sunk. Mr. Netanyahu wanted to meet Mr. Clinton after attending a summit meeting with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Channel 2 said. There was also an attempt to convene a summit in Washington, with Mr. Clinton, Mr. Netanyahu, Mr. Arafat, Mr. Mubarak and His Majesty King Hussein taking part, the television said. However, it became clear that the chances of either summit taking place were negligible, and therefore Mr. Netanyahu decided to cancel his trip to Washington. Channel 2 said.

## King calls on Israel to halt settlements, put end to demographic manipulation

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Friday called on Israel to halt its policies of settlement, land confiscation and demographic manipulation, and warned that the Israeli settlement policies endanger hopes and detract from the aim of achieving a durable and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

In an address to the annual International Labour Organisation (ILO) conference, held in Geneva, King Hussein stressed the need for a complete cessation of disconcerting policies and

practices contravening international legitimacy, like the policies of settlement, land confiscation and demographic manipulation to ensure the continuation of the peace process. The King noted that "such policies would also have an adverse effect on the endeavours to revive the other peace tracks."

King Hussein said Jordan had translated its quest for peace into action, by signing a peace treaty with Israel in 1994. "Jordan had fulfilled its obligations under the peace treaty with

Israel," the King said, adding that Jordan would continue to work for the achievement of a durable, just and comprehensive peace in the region. The King added that such peace "will provide the future generations of the children of Abraham the opportunities they always longed for, one in which Jerusalem will be the symbol of coexistence in harmony among the followers of the three monotheistic religions."

"Under such a peace, Jerusalem will also represent the achievement of an

Arab-Israeli peace and more particularly a Palestinian-Israeli peace in an open city constituting in its eastern and western parts a capital of both Palestine and Israel, or in any manner that the Palestinians and Israelis may, within the parameters and rules of international law, agree upon in the negotiations of the final status settlement," the King said.

The King reviewed Jordan's achievements in the political, economic, social

(Continued on page 7)

## Fears of new Israeli-Palestinian violence as peace attempts wane

Combined Agency Dispatches

FEARS OF renewed violence between Israelis and Palestinians rose Friday after the latest diplomatic bid to revive the peace process ran aground and the rumblings of Palestinian protests began.

Over 300 Palestinians and Israelis marched Friday to protest against the confiscation of lands by a Jewish settlement outside the West Bank city of Nablus, an AFP correspondent said. The group of demonstrators included members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Israeli peace activists and left-wing Israeli MPs Tamar Gozansky and Walid Sadek.

The demonstrators marched from the village of Jalud, south of Nablus, to a 200-hectare piece of land seized from Palestinian owners by the nearby Jewish settlement of Shilho, where they were stopped by Israeli soldiers.

They made speeches at the site against the confiscation of Palestinian lands

and the demonstration ended peacefully.

Demonstrations against settlement expansion in the Gaza Strip Thursday turned into clashes between protesters and Israeli soldiers which left five Palestinians injured and one dead from a heart attack.

Israel deployed two tanks close to one Gaza trouble spot, but out of sight of Palestinians. Israel television, however, showed the tanks on the evening news, a signal from the Israeli army that if Palestinian

(Continued on page 7)

## Arab World condemns Congress resolution recognising 'unified Jerusalem' as Israel's eternal capital

Combined agency dispatches

HAMAS CONDEMNED on Friday a U.S. House of Representatives vote recognising Jerusalem as Israel's unified capital as a "provocation" against the world's Muslims.

"We in Hamas condemn this measure and we say those who passed it will bear responsibility for its consequences," the Islamic

Resistance Movement (Hamas) said in a statement received by AFP.

The resolution, passed on Wednesday, "is a new provocation against the feelings of Arabs and Muslims throughout the world and shows clearly the United States' bias against our people," Hamas said.

"The members of Congress who voted for it have

(Continued on page 7)

## King says House vote on Jerusalem undermines U.S. role

GENEVA (R) — King Hussein said on Friday that a U.S. House of Representatives resolution calling on President Bill Clinton to reaffirm that Jerusalem must remain Israel's undivided capital "sort of undermined" the U.S. role in the peace process. But King Hussein, speaking to reporters in Geneva after addressing the International Labour Conference, said he still hoped Washington would be an "honest broker" in the process. King Hussein, in a first reaction to the vote, told reporters: "I think it is very sad, very unfortunate that such a decision should have emanated from the United States at this particular point in time. 'Jerusalem is a very, very sensitive issue. At the same time it is a final status negotiation issue,' he added, referring to negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority. "This is something for them to decide. To prejudge the issue in this way is not very constructive at all," King Hussein said he hoped the United States would play more than a postman's role between the two sides, adding, "unfortunately such actions as we have seen yesterday sort of undermine that (U.S.) capability."

## U.N. General Assembly orders Israel to pay for Cana shelling damages

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The U.N. General Assembly on Friday ordered Israel to pay \$1.7 million in damages for the deadly Israeli shelling of a U.N. compound in south Lebanon.

Israel's U.N. delegate immediately said his country would not pay, after Lebanon rejected a U.S. attempt to water down the resolution.

The vote confirmed an unprecedented motion in the assembly's fifth committee, responsible for

finances, which folded the decision concerning Israel into a resolution on the financing of the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

In the General Assembly vote on Friday, on the same resolution, 127 states voted in favour while Israel and the United States voted against. Russia abstained on the ground that political considerations were not appropriate in a financing resolution.

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## Iraq blocks 3 more arms inspections in escalation with United Nations

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — Armed Iraqi guards have blocked three U.N. arms inspections, acting on government orders, despite being informed that such action was in violation of U.N. resolutions, U.N. officials said Thursday.

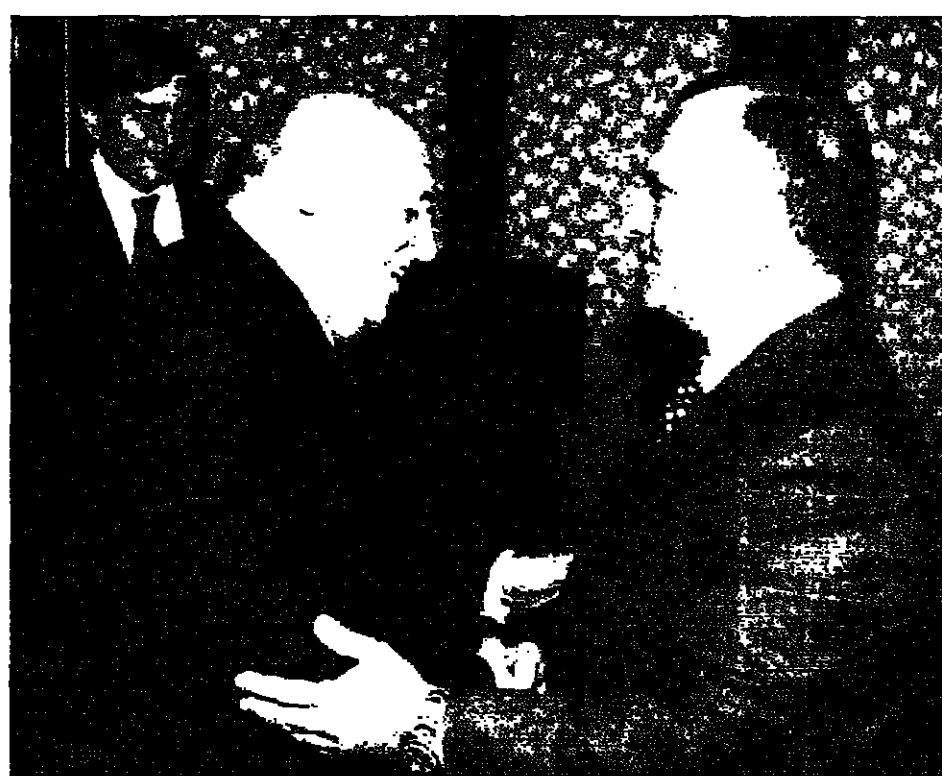
The latest incidents mark an escalation in tensions between Iraq and the United Nations, with the U.N. Security Council poised to react to last week's Iraqi interference with U.N. helicopter operations in Iraq.

Highlighting the serious

nature of the violations, U.N. special commission chairman Rolf Ekeus informed the U.N. Security Council in a letter that "the commission is concerned that a decision has been taken by the government of Iraq to prevent full implementation of the commission's mandate."

UNSCOM Deputy Chief Charles Duelfer told AFP that after making one inspection of a military facility in the Baghdad area

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His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Turkish President Suleyman Demirel meet upon the arrival of Prince Hassan to Ankara where he also met with Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan and other officials. The Crown Prince left Turkey on Thursday (Photo by Boghos)

## Crown Prince assured of Turkish army withdrawal from north Iraq

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

ANKARA — HRH Crown Prince Hassan ended a short working visit here Thursday saying he was satisfied with official assurances that Turkey would soon withdraw its army from northern Iraq based on its respect for the territorial integrity of its neighbour to the south.

Jordan strongly condemns terrorism in all its forms. The Crown Prince told the leadership in Ankara in reference to acts carried out by the PKK Kurdish group against Turkish targets. But it is as important to recognise the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, he added, in clear reference to the need for withdrawing the Turkish army from northern Iraq.

"The map of the region should not be changed," the Prince asserted. The Crown Prince

described his visit to Turkey, during which he met with both President Suleyman Demirel and Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, as aimed at achieving two goals. First, to discuss and cooperate closely on achieving peace and stability in the whole Middle East region and to strengthen bilateral relations. Second, to clarify Turkey's position on its army's incursion into northern Iraq, which the Crown Prince said was negatively perceived by Arab public opinion.

"While the situation in the border territory is not very clear yet, the Turkish position on respecting Iraq's, and other countries', sovereignty and territorial integrity is indeed clear," he told Mr. Erbakan. "To this end, we are pleased to hear your assurances that the army will pull out from northern Iraq as soon as possible, for all security-related measures have to

come to an end sometime."

While President Demirel did not mention the issue of the incursion when he welcomed the Crown Prince in the presence of the media, Prime Minister Erbakan told him publicly that "Turkey was forced to intervene (against the rebel PKK group) in light of the criminal acts it was committing."

"Turkey often stated that it is committed to the unity and sovereignty of Iraq. After achieving its aims (of cleaning up guerrilla bases in the region) the Turkish army will withdraw," Mr. Erbakan said in his remarks welcoming the Crown Prince. "Turkey has and will continue to have strong relations with the Arab and Muslim Worlds, and we pledge to continue with the policies of non-interference in other countries' affairs."

Furthermore, the Islamist prime minister, who is

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## Japanese envoy urges Lebanon to hand over Red Army fighters

BEIRUT (AFP) — Japan's ambassador to Lebanon urged the government again Friday to agree to the extradition of five members of the Japanese Red Army extremist group who went on trial here on Monday.

"We hope the (Lebanese) government will adopt the right position and hand the arrested people over to us," Ambassador Yasuji Ishigaki told a weekly magazine here.

He said Japan had made no link between its finan-

cial aid and investment in Lebanon and the extradition request.

The Red Army members went on trial in Beirut Monday on forgery charges. The five, arrested February 15, include Kozo Okamoto, 49, who is the sole survivor of the 1972 attack on Tel Aviv's Lod airport which left more than two dozen people dead.

They have not been charged with any offences relating to their membership of the Japanese Red

Army, which carried out a string of bloody terrorist attacks in Asia, Europe and the Middle East in the 1970s and 1980s.

The next hearing in the trial is to take place on Monday.

Japan and Lebanon are not linked by an extradition treaty, and it is up to the Lebanese cabinet to decide whether to hand over the five after the trial ends.

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## First Jordanian satire, Abed Rabbo, folds

By Amy Henderson Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The weekly Abed Rabbo newspaper today takes its last stab as Jordan's first satirical political paper and becomes the first casualty of the new Press and Publications Law introduced last month.

After only ten months and 45 issues of publication, Abed Rabbo's chief editor said that the newspaper's administrators have chosen to close the paper because it would not be able to afford monetary fines imposed by the new law.

"The new law is elastic,

and it can be applied to almost any article we publish," said Youssef Ghishan. "The ambiguities of the law can be translated in any way."

The provisions of the new law impose fines ranging from JD30,000-50,000 and oblige papers, both dailies and weeklies, to raise their capital. The two factors combined are expected to put the country's nascent weekly press industry out of business, as many will not be able to accommodate the capital requirements imposed.

This is not the case with Abed Rabbo, says Mr.

Ghishan. Owners and publishers of the papers also own the prominent weekly Shihab and the new multi-million dinar Arabic daily Al Arab Al Yawm. Capital, he said, was not a factor in the administration's decision. But Abed Rabbo's status as a satirical paper and the "elasticity" of the law, he said, expose it to the potential of sustaining heavy financial penalties.

The law offers an extended list of issues that cannot be covered in news articles, editorials or cartoons. The government has justified the law saying that a new law was necessary after

officials, parliamentarians, citizens and journalists themselves complained that the weekly press often had exceeded the bounds of public decency in dealing with many issues.

Mr. Ghishan asserts that a satirical paper is a special breed of press which "needs a wider range of freedom than a regular newspaper," he said, "and the new law does not provide that."

According to Mr. Ghishan, Abed Rabbo currently has three cases pending

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## Foul-play during English language Tawjihi examination investigated

By Rana Hussein Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Minister of Education Munther Masri said Friday that the Higher Examination Committee will decide today on the fate of the Tawjihi English language exam, following the chaos which erupted Thursday in some examination halls in the Balqa Governorate.

A group of people interfered during the examination course, by entering the two schools and passing the correct answers for students sitting in for the exam, in Yarqa and Adib

Wahbeh secondary schools in Salt, said an official statement from the Ministry of Interior.

"The examination committee will study the reports submitted from the exam inspectors, and based on the findings, the committee will decide to either repeat the exam, or take the appropriate measures against the violators," Dr. Masri said.

Reports in the daily newspapers stated that family members of students sitting in for the English language exams attacked the secondary schools with stones and

sticks, one hour after the exam started causing chaos in the exam rooms, and forcing exam inspectors to leave their posts.

The Ministry of Interior statement added that an individual also attempted to take the exam instead of a late student, "but fled as soon as the student arrived to take his exam seat."

The statement, published by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that an investigation committee was formed to investigate the matter, stressing that "severe punishment will be taken against the perpetrators."

# IMF declines to follow up PNA corruption report

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) representative in Palestinian-ruled areas said on Friday the IMF would not get involved in a Palestinian National Authority (PNA) probe into charges of corruption and misuse of public funds.

"This internal probe should be allowed enough time to run its course," Salam Fayyad, IMF representative in the West Bank and Gaza, told Reuters.

"The fund does not see much scope for such involvement as several

aspects of the follow-up work would clearly fall outside the fund's domain," he said.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has appointed a committee to look into an auditors' report that Palestinian authority officials had squandered \$326 million in public funds over one year.

Mr. Fayyad said it would be "premature and counterproductive" for the fund to pass judgement on the PLO auditors' report.

PLO officials said international donor states — which have provided some

\$1.4 billion in aid to the Palestinians since 1993 — had pressed the IMF to actively help the Palestinian authority follow up the corruption report.

They said international donors attending a meeting of the ad-hoc liaison committee of major donors in Washington last week had expressed concern over possible Palestinian misuse of international funds, PLO officials said.

Fayyad expressed confidence in the Palestinian investigation now under way.

"I expect that due process

will be followed in conducting the inquiry by the presidential commission, that the outcome of the inquiry will be made public, and that appropriate action would be taken," Fayyad said.

Tayeb Abdul Rahim, head of Arafat's presidential commission, said follow-up work on the auditors' report had begun but did not reveal the steps to be taken by the committee.

PLO officials said last week Attorney-General Khaled Al Qidra was fired from his job under suspicion of corruption.



PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CLASHES: Palestinian elderly men on Thursday stand next to an Israeli APC holding a national flag during clashes which erupted between Israeli army and Palestinian protesters on the land which was confiscated for the opening of a road for Jewish settlers of the Moraj settlement in Rafah (Photo by AFP)

## Saudi Arabia beheads Afghani for drug smuggling

JEDDAH (AP) — An Afghan man convicted of drug trafficking was beheaded Friday, bringing to 49 the number of people executed in Saudi Arabia this year.

Abdul Malik Abdul Wahid was found guilty of trying to smuggle an undisclosed amount of heroin into the kingdom and was executed in the Holy City of Mecca, the interior ministry said.

It said the heroin was found in Abdul Wahid's intestines, but gave no further details. Smugglers are known to swal-

low plastic bags packed with drugs to avoid detection.

Concerned at a growing drug problem, the government of this kingdom warned that others caught smuggling drugs would meet the same fate.

A total of 19 convicted drug smugglers have been executed this year, 14 of them since May. In 1996, 71 people were beheaded.

Saudi Arabia's courts impose the death penalty for crimes such as rape, murder and drug trafficking.

## Palestinian bomber on hunger strike in Cyprus to get out of detention

NICOSIA (AFP) — A Palestinian who bungled a bomb attack on the Israeli embassy in Cyprus has gone on hunger strike to protest his continued detention a year after finishing his jail term, police said Thursday.

Omar Hawillo, 36, was released from prison last July after an eight-year term but has remained in a police cell because no other country will take him, they said.

He launched his hunger strike last Friday. "I will not take food unless something is done. I am ready to die rather than stay in prison," he told local newspapers.

Mr. Hawillo, originally from Lebanon, was jailed for 15 years in 1988 for manslaughter after a bomb blast near the Israeli embassy in Nicosia that killed three people.

A booby-trapped jeep exploded on a bridge after security personnel prevented

the driver from parking outside the embassy. Mr. Hawillo's Lebanese accomplice and two Cypriots were killed, and 19 other people injured.

The attack came at a time when the Palestinian uprising or intifada against Israel was at its height.

Mr. Hawillo was released from a Nicosia prison in July last year but has remained in a police detention cell because Cyprus wants to deport him but no country is willing to accept him because of his criminal background.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees has turned down his request for help, saying he does not qualify as a refugee.

Mr. Hawillo still has no travel documents but wants to be released so he can look for a country to receive him.

According to press reports, his health has declined since he launched his hunger strike.

## Convicted murderer to be executed at Swaga today

By Rana Hussein  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A 26-year-old, convicted of murdering a man in the Baqaa Refugee Camp in 1994, is expected to be executed at dawn today at Swaga prison, according to judicial sources.

Muntasser Rajab Abu Zeid, found guilty of the premeditated murder of Anwar Ahmad Hassan in a cemetery in the Baqaa Camp Dec. 3, 1994, was sentenced to death by the Criminal Court on Nov. 23, 1996.

According to court papers, Mr. Abu Zeid heard from friends that the victim was engaged in an extra-marital affair with his mother-in-law. The court said the defendant monitored Mr. Hassan and his mother-in-law, saw them together several times, and plotted to kill him, the court said.

On the night of the murder, Mr. Abu Zeid lured Mr. Hassan to a cemetery in the Baqaa Camp, claiming that he wanted to talk with him about an important matter.

He then drew a gun he had purchased two weeks prior to the incident, court transcripts said, and shot the victim

three times in the back of the head, then fled the scene.

The following day, the court added, Mr. Abu Zeid went to the victim's family and offered his condolences.

Mr. Abu Zeid was arrested eight months after admitting to one of his friends what he had done and then later told the authorities.

In his confession, Mr. Abu Zeid reportedly told police that he did not regret what he did and that he killed Mr. Hassan to "cleanse his family's and his mother-in-law's honour."

If the execution is carried out as scheduled, Mr. Abu Zeid will be the fourth person to be put to death in the Kingdom since the beginning of the year.

Last year, the human rights organisation, Amnesty International (AI), quoted Mr. Abu Zeid as saying that he and his wife were tortured while in detention.

AI had said that during his trial, Mr. Abu Zeid reported the alleged torture, "but the court did not order an investigation into these allegations."

Mr. Abu Zeid's wife, who was not a suspect in the case, was released from police custody, the AI statement said.

## Qatari emir asks Clinton to seek dialogue with Iran

WASHINGTON (AP) — The emir of Qatar was not shy about urging U.S. President Bill Clinton to talk with Iran.

In his first visit to the White House, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani urged Mr. Clinton to consider softening his tough line on Iran because "people have suffered enough." "The Americans should make a dialogue with Iran," the 47-year-old Arab leader said Wednesday.

"Business will lead to cooperation and the whole region would benefit, would be more secure," he said. "I think it would be wise for the American administration to move a step forward."

Isolation is not working, he said, and the approach of some European countries — trade plus dialogue — may lead to reconciliation. A more moderate leadership was recently elected.

"It is now clear to me the Iranians are now thinking about themselves" and their

position in the world, the emir said, adding that he understood the United States has a different perspective.

"For us," he said, "we are next to Iran."

On Iraq, which the United States is trying to isolate, Sheikh Hamad was cautious.

While Qatar observes U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq for invading Kuwait in 1990, the emir said: "As a small country, we are trying to have good relations with Iran, Iraq, Israel, with everybody."

The White House reaffirmed its policy. "We think our strategy for bringing the international community's concerns to bear on both countries... because of their reprehensible policies is a correct one," presidential spokesman Mike McCurry said. Apart from his meetings with senior U.S. officials, the emir was looking forward to a trip to Disneyland in Orlando, Florida, later in the week.

## Lebanon to build \$1.2 billion motorways

BEIRUT (AFP) — The Lebanese government has decided to set up a \$350 million company to carry out a \$1.2 billion plan to build three highways, including a motorway to the Syrian border, officials said Thursday.

The cabinet approved late Wednesday a proposal to create a private company, named "Toll Road Company," entrusted to carry out the highway projects on a BOT (build-operate-transfer) basis, they said.

The cabinet asked the Public Investment Development Authority of Lebanon (IDAL) to create before the end of 1997 the firm, to be listed on the

Beirut stock exchange with a capital raised by Lebanese and foreign subscription.

The plans cover the construction of a 62-kilometre highway linking Beirut to the Lebanese-Syrian international border, estimated to cost \$800 million.

The motorway has been dubbed the "Arab highway" because it is set to allow goods to travel by land from Beirut port to Syria and then on to Jordan, Iraq and the oil-rich Gulf Arab countries.

The company will also complete a Beirut ring road and a highway at the capital's northern entrance, due to cost \$400 million.

Lebanon was negotiating for 30-year BOT contracts with the French firms Bouygues and Dumez for the Arab highway and ring road, and with Bouygues and the German group Walter Bau AG-Dywid AG for the third motorway.

"The companies only managed to raise a capital of between \$125 million and \$150 million, which was clearly not enough," Prime Minister Rafik Hariri said after the cabinet session.

He said the French and German companies failed to secure funding from money markets and had asked for Lebanese government guarantees.

"We preferred to create a company with a \$350 million capital which will allow it to secure funding without resorting to state guarantees," the billionaire prime minister said.

The French companies have previously said that they could not get the required amount of funding because projected traffic on the Arab highway was not enough to secure considerable returns.

The highway projects are part of a 10-year reconstruction programme, estimated at \$18 billion, launched by the Lebanese government after the devastating 1975-1990 civil war.

## Court sentences man to 15 years with labour on manslaughter verdict

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Criminal Court Thursday sentenced one man to 15-years imprisonment with temporary hard labour after he was found guilty of killing a 27-year-old man last year.

The court tribunal found Michael H. 30, guilty of shooting and killing Tawfiq Khouri in the victim's house in Jabal Weibdeh on April 17, 1996.

The same court acquitted Michael's brother Munther who was charged with complicity in crime.

Mr. Khouri, a business man, was shot by his brother-in-law Michael five times in the head and chest at the front door of the victim's home at 11 p.m.

Initial reports had said that "family problems were believed to be the motive behind the murder."

The court, upon the defence attorneys' request, banned the press from reporting the court sessions.

The verdict will automatically be reviewed by the Court of Cassation within the next 30 days.

### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

### PROGRAMME TWO

15:35 French Programmes

16:00 Gillette World Sport Special

16:30 Innovation

16:50 Tilt

17:15 Blue Heelers

18:00 French Programmes

19:00 News in French

19:30 News Headline

19:35 Hanging With Mr. Cooper

20:00 Magazine Zero One

20:30 Prison

21:10 Time Trax

22:00 News in English

22:30 Macguyver

23:15 Soccer Match — Paraguay vs. Ecuador

### PRAYER TIMES

03:50 Fajr

05:25 (Sunrise) Duha

12:36 Dhuhr

16:16 Asr

19:47 Maghreb

21:22 Isha

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

Sweifeh, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785.

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

### Church of the Annunciation

Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661656.

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 623366.

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.

Anglican Church Tel. 652826.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.

Amman International Church Tel. 5516245.

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457.

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654952.

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295.

English-speaking

Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

A slight rise in temperature will

take place and winds will be northwesterly moderate. In

Aqaba, it will be moderate with northerly winds.

Min/Max. temp.

Amman 15/29

Aqaba 22/36

Deserts 23/36

Jordan Valley 13/33

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 32 Aqaba 38 Humidity

readings: Amman 35 per cent.

Aqaba 30 per cent.

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

#### NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Khalil Al Tushy 757253

Dr. Bahjat Bader 832642

Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 830432

Dr. Wafiq Qaddumi 893542

Firas pharmacy 661912

Fardous pharmacy 778336

Al Asema pharmacy 637055

Nairookh pharmacy 625672

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

Najib pharmacy 847632

### IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281484

Al Quds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Walid Nabhan 995445

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 617101

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 605800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101

### Abdali Telephone Repairs

661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

### HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6

Akileh Maternity, J. Amn 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malhas, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Anli, Abdali 664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajir 77101/3

### Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh

775111/26

Army, Marika 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50

Amal Hospital 674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732

Al Hikam Modern Hospital (09)990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital (02)755555

Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275

Dun Al Nafes Hospital (02)247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

### FOR THE TRAVELLER

#### QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia

### International Airport Tel. 0853200

where it should always be verified. Information on other flights is obtained on telephone (08) 52700 or (08) 523250.

### ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

08:05 Damascus (RJ)

09:45 New Delhi (RJ)

10:25 Beirut (RJ)

10:30 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)

11:00 Colombo (RJ)

15:55 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

17:15 Cairo (RJ)

19:10 London, Berlin (RJ)</



## Queen reviews NHF evaluation mission with ILO director-general, experts

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Friday met in Geneva with International Labour Organisation (ILO) Deputy Director-General Chinery-Hesse and a team of experts to discuss the follow up to the ILO evaluation mission of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF), a Royal Court statement said.

The ILO is assisting the NHF, which is currently restructuring and planning its future activities, in evaluating and assessing its existing projects, the statement said.

Through its technical cooperation programme, the ILO will help in enhancing NHF's institutional capacity building and micro-enterprise development, with special emphasis on projects for women.

The organisation plans to hold a regional seminar in Amman, in cooperation with the NHF, on micro-enterprise promotion for women in the Arab states.

It is also working with the National Task Force for Children (NTFC), which is chaired by Queen Noor, in compiling comprehensive research on child labour in Jordan.

The latter will be a component of ILO's report on the status of child labour in the Arab World.

The battle against child labour has been a priority for the ILO since its inception in 1919. Since the early nineties the ILO has mounted a major offensive against this abuse through its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour by assisting ILO member states in carrying out operational activities to solve child labour problems.

The NTFC monitors the condition and status of children in accordance with the Arab and International Convention on the Rights of the Child and the National Plan of Action for Children.

With intellectual roots in the 19th century, the ILO was a creation of the Treaty of Versailles and the establishment of the League of Nations.

In 1946, it became an agency of the United Nations, and on its 50th anniversary in 1996, it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The ILO now has 174 member countries, and is heavily involved in all of the key issues in the new world economy, such as employment, child labour, equality for women, and human rights.

Advisor to the Queen In'am Mufti and Nabil Khouri, director of ILO's multi-disciplinary team in Beirut, ILO Special Advisor on Women and Gender Issues Jane Zhang and Josiane Capt of ILO's Enterprise Management Branch participated in the meeting with Queen Noor.

## Jordan makes progress in human development; drop in index scale not serious — UNDP official

By Tanya Habjouqa  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative in Jordan Jørgen Lissner said Thursday Jordan's drop in rank from 70 to 84 in the 1997 Human Development Index (HDI) is not as serious as it appears.

Speaking at the official launching of the 1997 Human Development Report (HDR), Mr. Lissner explained that with 175 countries squeezed into a scale, minor changes can result in a major move of a country up and down that scale.

The UNDP's Human Development Index measures three variables reflecting a country's basic quality of life — income, life expectancy and literacy.

"Countries which improve their HDI score can be overtaken by other countries that have higher rates of progress," Mr. Lissner said. He emphasised that Jordan has progressed since the early 1990's from an HDI coefficient of 0.628 to the present 0.730 level.

"This is a major achievement which must not be overshadowed by a minor statistical technicality," he stressed.

According to UNDP, because the most recent global statistics are three years old, the HDI values in the 1997 report are based on 1994 figures of each country.

The 1997 report focuses on the multifaceted nature of poverty, analysing how different countries have succeeded, or failed, to reduce it, he said.

A Human Poverty Index (HPI) has been introduced this year, differentiating between human poverty and income poverty.

"Poverty is more than a lack of income," Mr. Lissner said. "It is the denial of choices and opportunities to

lead a tolerable life."

The HPI disregards the income factor all together and focuses exclusively on deprivation in human terms, he said.

These include the percentage of people who die before 40, percentage of adults who are illiterate, the percentage of people without access to safe water and health services, and the percentage of underweight children under five, he explained.

Noting some historical achievements, the 1997 report cites Jordan as one of 10 countries which made the greatest progress in reducing the under-five-years-old mortality rate, with an 80% decline between 1970 and 1995, a UNDP statement said.

Jordan also made it on the top ten list of countries with a remarkable decline in adult illiteracy between 1970 and 1975, the report said.

According to Mr. Lissner, the HPI, which includes 78 developing countries, places Jordan at "a very respectable 8th place from the top."

Jordan is in the top 10 percent, surpassed only by six Latin American countries and Singapore, he affirmed.

Mr. Lissner said that although government statistics show approximately 21% of the population to be below the poverty line (measured in terms of income and consumption), only 10.9% are victims of the deprivations reflected in the HPI.

"The rest are poor in terms of income, but manage to lead modestly decent lives anyway," Mr. Lissner said.

He attributed this to government health services, education, and "invisible" support from the extended family.

The report ends with a six-point action plan to eradicate extreme poverty in the next two decades, UNDP officials stated.

These include the "empowerment of women

## Princess Basma targets poverty in challenge for human development

BONN (J.T.) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Thursday said poverty is the greatest challenge for human development in the Middle East region, and called for developing proper policies to address poverty and poverty-related problems.

Addressing a special ceremony to launch the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report, Princess Basma, who has been designated as the U.N. ambassador for Human Development Affairs, said poverty does not only mean the lack of financial, economic and social stability, but also that basic human rights, including the rights to education, health, and the like are not addressed.

She stressed the importance of rearranging political, economic, and social priorities with a view to creating a world free from poverty. Praising Arab developmental achievements, Princess Basma said the Middle Eastern Arab countries have made great strides in the educational, health, social and economic fields, despite the upheavals, unrest and stability which prevailed in the region during the 20th century.

She noted that Arab countries have been able to bridge the gap with their European neighbours in such areas as education, life

expectancy, infant and child mortality and economic growth.

Outlining the importance of fighting illiteracy as a prelude to poverty reduction, Princess Basma said any effort to fight poverty alone in isolation of illiteracy will be unsuccessful.

She noted that poverty and illiteracy are two major obstacles to human development.

The greatest challenge facing planners and decision makers in the region, she said, lies in finding the best way to utilise the available resources to achieve human development objectives, noting that previous (UNDP) Human Development Reports have shown that economic growth in some countries has not contributed to the efforts for poverty reduction.

Princess Basma said poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, requiring multi-dimensional solutions, as well as mobilising all efforts, and utilising the potentials made available by the modern technology in the fight against poverty.

The ceremony was organised by the German Federation for International Development and UNDP, in cooperation with the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development.

## Police arrest 2 suspects in Jabal Amman double murder

By Rana Hussein  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Police Friday announced the arrest of two suspects in connection with the brutal murder of a 63-year-old man and his secretary Wednesday near the Fourth Circle, official sources said.

Forty-eight hours after Jubrael Iskandar Nino, and his secretary Fatimah Michael Hanania, 32, were found murdered in Mr. Nino's office behind Zahran Palace, police said they have arrested two suspects.

The authorities identified the suspects as Hani Padi Fouadini, 21, and his 19-year-old brother Hisham, who was Mr. Nino's messenger and guard, both

Egyptian nationals.

According to a police official, the two suspects confessed and reenacted their crime. Police said the suspects told them that they wanted retribution for the continuous humiliation Hisham suffered from Mr. Nino.

The suspects, who confessed to plotting the murders, also said they planned to rob Mr. Nino, authorities said.

On the morning of the incident, officials said, the perpetrators took an iron bar, entered Mr. Nino's office, struck Ms. Hanania with it, then stabbed her several times with a switchblade.

The two then pulled her body into the bathroom. When Mr. Nino entered his

office 15 minutes later, they also struck him with the iron bar, searched the office, took JD 40 and some jewellery and fled," a police official said.

Mr. Nino's wife was the first to discover the bodies.

Hisham, who was absent from the office when the bodies were discovered, was later arrested in a hotel in downtown Amman. Hani was arrested in Aqaba port while attempting to leave the country, an informed source said.

Police found an iron bar they said is one of the murder weapons hidden in Hani's room which was located next to the office building where the crime was committed.

### WHAT'S GOING ON

#### PLAY

\*\*"Adam... Alone" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

#### LECTURES

\*Lecture on Iraqi art by artists Shaker Hassan and Farouq Yousef (with commentary by Her Royal Highness Princess Wijdan Ali) at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts at 6:00 p.m. (Tel. 630128).

\*"The Emergence of Science in Arabia and its Sources" by Dr. Ali Abdul Latif at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:30 p.m.

#### EXHIBITIONS

\*Paintings by contemporary Iraqi artists entitled "Ecology and Environment in Iraqi Art" at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts. 12 (except Tuesdays).

\*Photo exhibition of Hong Kong, sponsored by the Chinese embassy, at the Royal Cultural Centre, until June 19.

## Donor nations bring UNRWA budget deficit down to \$26m

By Ghaila Alul  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Although the informal meeting of donor nations and host governments last week resulted in the reduction of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA's) budget deficit to \$26 million, the agency's Commissioner General Peter Hansen warned of possible deflation.

During a two-day meeting, which ended Wednesday, donors pledged \$4.1 million to UNRWA's General Fund bringing down its budget deficit from about \$30 million to \$26 million.

Although there was no reduction in the amount of the

contributions to the agency, Mr. Hansen stressed that the agency is in need of larger donations to counter the increase in the refugee population.

The UNRWA budget for 1997 was \$352 million. At a press conference on Thursday, Mr. Hansen reiterated that UNRWA does not intend to reduce the level of the basic health, education and social services it has been providing to refugees since its establishment.

"UNRWA was established to provide services and not take them away," Mr. Hansen asserted.

To maintain the level of services, Mr. Hansen added, the agency might introduce what

he called "cost-sharing" where the refugees would be required to contribute a "symbolic amount of money" to cover health and educational costs.

"This is not expected to improve the agency's budget, but these contributions will improve the state of the agency's schools," which cater to the refugees, said Deputy Commissioner General Mohammad Abdul Mu'men.

At the meeting, which brought together 28 representatives from the agency's major donors and the European Union (EU), Saudi Arabia announced \$2.4 million to UNRWA for 1997, which, to its earlier contribution of \$1.2 million, represents a tripling of that kingdom's contribution to

the agency's General Fund over its 1996 level.

Mr. Hansen noted that over the last few years Saudi Arabia paid \$10 million each year for the Peace Implementation Programme (PIP), adding that Kuwait has been contributing \$1.5 million a year.

Pushing for more Arab contribution, he expressed hope that other Gulf countries would respond similarly to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

"If all gulf countries responded in a similar way to these two countries, the deficit problem would have been solved," said Mr. Hansen, adding that the problem of providing services to Palestinian refugees was not exclusive to Arab countries but was an

international responsibility.

Sweden announced \$1.2 million for education in Lebanon, and the Netherlands pledged \$530,000. The United States announced a new pledge of more than \$1.4 million in support of new PIP projects. Denmark announced \$7.7 million for 1997, including a \$3.4 million for the agency's General Fund and \$4.3 million for specific projects. Belgium pledged about \$600,000 million for PIP projects payable in 1998.

In his opening remarks to the donor meeting, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan had warned that many major donor countries were "disengaging too soon from an agenda of relief and recovery

that has not yet run its course."

Mr. Hansen said he was satisfied that during the meeting there was no sign of a reduction of contributions to the agency, adding that the donors "were aware that the refugee problem is very far from being solved."

According to a statement made available to the Jordan Times, donors reviewed UNRWA's current financial deficit and cash flow difficulties.

The statement added that there was strong support for intensive dialogue between the agency, donor countries and host governments in preparation for UNRWA's biennial budget for 1998-1999.

## Plastic artists reelect Khalid Khreis to lead association

By a Jordan Times  
Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordanian Plastic Arts Association Friday reelected painter Khalid Khreis as president of the association for another two-year term.

Dr. Khreis, who obtained his Ph.D in fine arts from Barcelona University in Spain, was first elected to head the association in 1995.

The association, established in 1978, has 235 members. Since 1979 Dr. Khreis, 41, has held more than 50 exhibitions in Jordan and abroad.

Among the most important have been at the Joan Miro International Drawing Contest in Barcelona (1980), "Miro and Picasso Homage," in Madrid (1985), "Contemporary Art in the Islamic World, Barbican Gallery, London (1990), "The Right to Hope," One World Art, part of the 50th anniversary commemorations of the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) which toured the globe for two years from 1995, and the Hordaland International Art Gallery, in Bergen Norway (1995).

In his first term as president, Dr.

Khreis worked to locate, refurbish and open a permanent home for the Plastic Arts Association in Jabal Weibdeh.

The edifice is a turn-of-the-century home which now brings artists from the region and abroad together for dialogue and exchanges of interests.

Dr. Khreis also introduced monthly exhibitions featuring either one artist or several in a group exhibition.

In December 1996 the association held its first Plastic Arts Week at the Royal Cultural Centre in Amman.

Currently around 70 artists, mostly from Jordan, are exhibiting their works in a special display at the new City Hall of the Amman Municipality.

He has also engaged association members in conferences and debates to, as he said "advance relations between the different cultural institutes in Jordan as well as abroad."

According to Dr. Khreis, this has borne fruit in that several members of the association have been invited to exhibit their works in many foreign countries.

Still, perhaps one of his most important missions has been to work with his fellow members to promote and encourage the work



Khalid Khreis

of young artists by allowing them membership into the association, arranging exhibitions for them and introducing them to the already accomplished cadres for inspiration.

Dr. Khreis credits the dedication and involvement of the members of the association in bringing the organisation to the forefront of

Jordan's expanding artistic frontier.

Also elected Friday, as members of the board of the association, were ceramic artist Najwa Annab, ceramic artist Ra'ed Al Dahleh, painter Sawwan Asfour, sculptor Nazih Uweiss, painter Ghassan Abu Laban and painter and art critic Mohammad Al Amiri.

Born in Karak, Dr. Khreis was a lecturer at the Fine Arts Institute of the Ministry of Culture from 1983 to 1989.

After graduating from Barcelona University in 1993, Dr. Khreis worked for Darat Al Funun, the fine arts centre of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation.

There, he was in charge of cultural and artistic affairs.

He currently teaches painting and drawing at the Faculty of Architecture and Fine Arts of the Jordan University for Women.

Among his several awards and prizes for his work in abstracts and often combining Arabic calligraphy into his free-style approach are the first prize in the Joan Miro International Contest of the Spanish Arab Institute in Madrid in 1985 and Jordan's National Award for Excellence in the Plastic Arts in 1995.

### Invitation To All Shareholders Of



### (PRIVATE PLACEMENT)

The Housing Bank announces a private placement of 25 million new shares to cover the Bank's capital increase from ( 25 ) million JD to ( 50 ) million JD as follows :-

- 1)- Registered shareholders as at 5 June 1997 are entitled to participate in this placement to the extent of their current share - holding .
- 2)- Issue price is set at 5 JD per share .
- 3)- Subscription starts on June 14 , 1997 and ends on June 30, 1997 .
- 4)- All new shares will receive full dividends for the year 1997 .
- 5)- Subscription applications should be submitted to any of the Bank's branches in Jordan or the PNA areas .

For more information please call shareholders affairs section at 607315



## Taleban defeated in northern Afghanistan, disarmed by allies

KABUL (AFP) — Taleban fighters have lost control of all centres in Northern Afghanistan following their withdrawal from the town of Pul-i-Khumri, the opposition said Thursday.

The Taleban, under strong pressure from opposition forces, evacuated the town late Tuesday night for the neighbouring city of Baghlan where they were disarmed by Commander Bashir Baghlani of the Hezb-i-Islami faction, said a spokesman for opposition Commander Ahmad Shah Masood.

"For sure Bashir has disarmed the retreating Taleban soldiers," said the spokesman, named Abdullah, by satellite telephone.

The reported disarmament of the estimated 3,000-strong Taleban came despite Mr. Bashir's support for the Islamic militia during their two-week occupation of Pul-i-Khumri, an important Baghlan provincial centre 230 kilometres north of Kabul.

However, unconfirmed reports state that Mr. Bashir has been appointed the new governor of Baghlan province. If true this would appear to be a political deal in which Mr. Bashir traded an alliance with the Taleban for a confirmed power-base.

"We don't have any problem concerning Bashir Baghlani's governorship," said Abdullah.

But Abdullah added he didn't know if Mr. Bashir had formally accepted the nomination of governor of Baghlan province.

Mr. Bashir's Hezb-i-Islami have been permanently based in Baghlan city, just 24 kilometres from Pul-i-Khumri, ever since the era of the ill-fated 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

As the Hezb-i-Islami of Mr. Bashir — who took over Baghlan after his brother Ghayoor was killed — and Mr. Masood have been traditional rivals, Western analysts expected there would be fighting between these two forces.

For the meantime it appears that Mr. Bashir and Mr. Masood have buried the hatchet, although it was still unclear whether the Taleban in Baghlan have been absorbed into Hezb-i-Islami, or will be released.

Meanwhile Pul-i-Khumri was reported calm and under the control of a joint anti-Taleban force made up of Mr. Masood's men, ethnic Uzbeks under General Abdul Malik, the Shiite Hezb-i-Wahdat faction and the Kayan militia.

The Kayan militia is headed by General Sayyad Jaffar Naderi, head of the Ismaeli religious minority sect. Gen. Jaffar was formerly governor of Pul-i-Khumri/Baghlan until pushed out by Mr. Bashir's forces this May.

Gen. Jaffar has reportedly accepted the nomination of Mr. Bashir as the new Baghlan governor.

In a related matter Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan

said Pakistan is trying to convene a five-nation regional conference to discuss the Afghan conflict.

Those invited to the proposed conference will include the war-torn country's immediate neighbours — Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, he said.

The minister will discuss the proposal during his forthcoming tour of Turkey, Iran, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kirgizstan.

Mr. Khan is due to leave for Turkey later this week to attend the conference of eight developing Muslim states being hosted in Istanbul.

In late May the Taleban took control of the whole of Northwest Afghanistan after the mutiny of General Malik who had toppled his boss General Abdul Rashid Dostum and let the Islamic militia enter the Uzbek capital Mazar-i-Sharif unopposed.

However Gen. Malik quickly revolted against the predominantly ethnic Pushtoon Taleban because they did not equitably share power with him, and the Islamic militia suffered a serious defeat in the north.

The Pul-i-Khumri based Taleban, the last major concentration of Islamic militia in the north, had been on their way from Kabul to Mazar when Gen. Malik turned against them.

On the frontlines north of Kabul, Mr. Abdullah said "the situation has not changed," with Mr. Masood's forces still occupying Jabal Os-Siraj and the Taleban just across the Salang River in the so-called 2nd Division Army Base.

"There is an exchange of heavy shellfire, but we have not lost Jabal Os-Siraj," Mr. Abdullah stated.

Meanwhile, Armed men kidnapped a former Afghan provincial governor, Gul Agha, from his home in the southwestern Pakistani town of Quetta Wednesday, his family said.

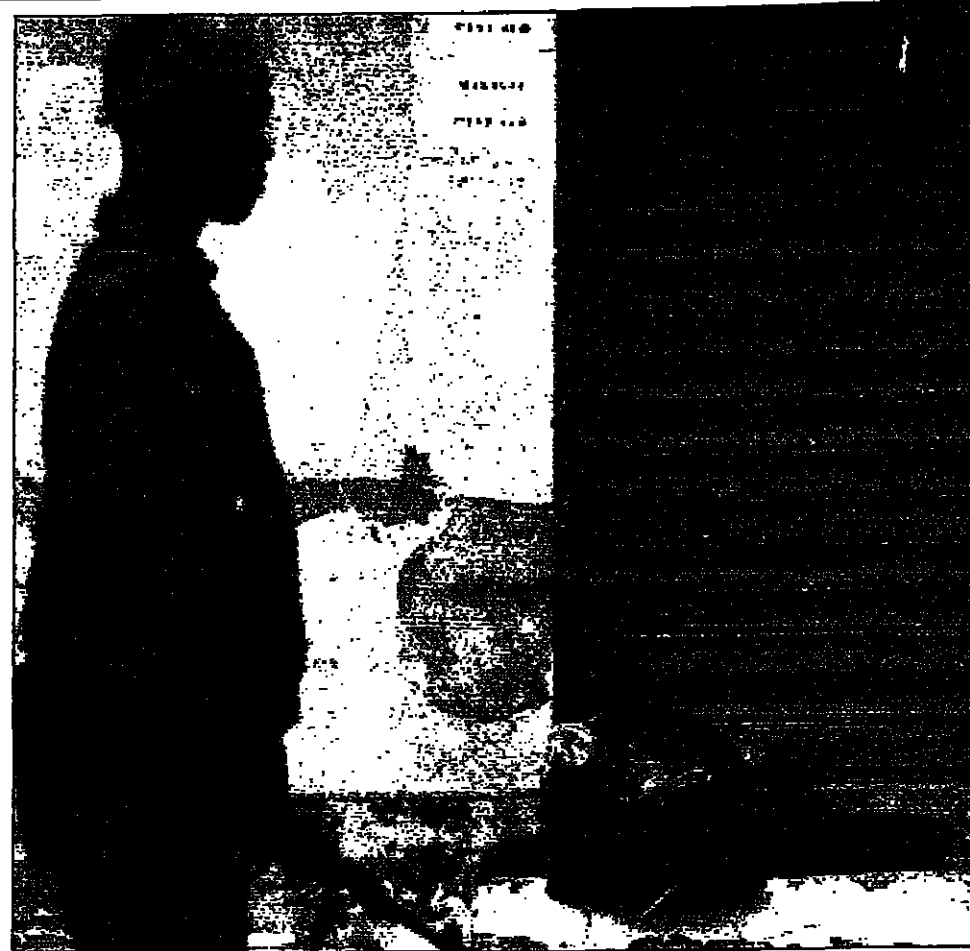
They said Mr. Agha, former governor of the southern Afghan province of Kandahar, was kidnapped at gun point by six men when he was supervising the construction of his house in Quetta, capital of Baluchistan province bordering Afghanistan and Iran.

One family member blamed the kidnapping on followers of the Taleban Islamic movement and said he might be tried by the Taleban government.

Taleban sources in Quetta said they were unaware of the kidnapping.

Police in Quetta have registered a complaint of kidnapping but have made no immediate arrests, police sources said.

Mr. Agha was governor of Kandahar under the government of ousted President Burhanuddin Rabbani until the Taleban militia took control of the province in November 1994 in the early days of their emergence. Since then Mr. Agha has lived in Quetta as an exile.



A 'Cobra' militia fighter loyal to President Denis Nguesso stands near a victim of fighting between forces loyal to the president and a former Marxist military ruler (Reuters photo)

## WHO staff evacuation leaves thousands without food in Congo

GENEVA (Agencies) — Thousands of Rwandan refugees have been left without food in Congo after fighting in the capital Brazzaville forced the World Health Organisation (WHO) to evacuate more than 300 staff, the U.N. body said Friday.

Some of the refugees have been reduced to eating roots, a U.N. spokesman said.

The WHO evacuated 326 non-essential staff from its central African headquarters in Brazzaville Thursday to Libreville in Gabon, spokesman Philippe Stroot said.

The organisation is keeping 30 staff in Brazzaville. Another key aid agency, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has withdrawn its international staff to the Gabonese capital, spokeswoman Pamela O'Toole said.

An estimated 18,000 Rwandan refugees have been left without food aid as it has been impossible to get supplies to them since fighting flared in the capital eight days ago.

Some 5,500 are situated around 20 kilometres from Brazzaville, with the others scattered between 400-800 kilometres further north along the banks of the Congo River.

Deprived of supplies, the refugees have begun to strip crops from surrounding farms and even to eat roots, Mrs. O'Toole said.

The UNHCR said it was studying the possibility of reaching at least some of the refugees by moving aid supplies in from the neighbouring Central African Republic.

Fighting in the bullet-scarred Congolese capital

subsidised into an eerie calm early Friday though no ceasefire had been declared.

A few sporadic bursts of gunfire rattled in the deserted streets of the suburbs, but France's Ambassador Raymond Cesaire was hopeful that the calm signalled an "informal truce" which would evolve into a ceasefire.

"I think now that the worst is over," he told AFP. A week of intense fighting in the capital left the streets littered with bodies and aid agencies have estimated a death toll in the thousands.

A senior French military officer in Brazzaville said: "We can only hope that this precarious calm is going to last and allow a truce which will lead to a ceasefire. But we have to be cautious."

The opposing factions of President Pascal Lissouba and former President Denis Sassou Nguesso, have previously said they would accept a ceasefire but their forces carried on fighting.

Meanwhile, the European Parliament Thursday urged the European Union (EU) states, and France in particular, not to intervene in the conflict in Congo unless the United Nations gave them a mandate to do so.

The member states should "abstain from military intervention in the Congo until such time as they have obtained a U.N. mandate to do so, except with the aim of protecting the safety of their citizens," the EU assembly said in a resolution on the situation in Congo-Brazzaville.

Jean-Francois Hory, the French Radical Party Euro-MP who drafted that part of the resolution, explicitly stated he had France in mind.

"Once again, the finger is pointing at France, as it was in Zaire and Rwanda. France has been so discredited by its neo-colonial policy that even its best intentions are suspect," Mr. Hory told the Strasbourg-based assembly.

French President Jacques Chirac Monday urged the warring sides in the Congo "to decide on a ceasefire as soon as possible and accept the mediation of (Gabon President) Omar Bongo to seek a political solution, his office told reporters.

Mr. Chirac's intervention came as France, the former colonial power, sent more troops to the embattled Congolese capital Brazzaville.

The French army said yesterday its light tanks had begun arriving in Brazzaville to reinforce 1,250 French soldiers evacuating foreigners from fighting between supporters of President Pascal Lissouba and those of former Marxist military leader Denis Sassou Nguesso.

The European Parliament urged the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to mediate in the conflict, which erupted on June 5 after soldiers surrounded Mr. Sassou Nguesso's home as part of a crackdown on militias and illegal arms ahead of a July 27 presidential election.

Calling for an urgent ceasefire, the assembly in Strasbourg insisted only free, democratic elections could restore stability to the country.

Mr. Lissouba won a 1992 presidential election after Mr. Sassou Nguesso, president from 1979, bowed to calls for multi-party politics.

## U.S. congressional panel approves deal on U.N. dues

WASHINGTON (R) — A bill that would allow payment of most of the massive U.S. debt to the United Nations, but with substantial strings attached, was passed Thursday by a key Senate committee.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted 14-4 for the measure under which the United States would pay the world body \$819 million in back dues after several members protested the conditions.

In order to receive the payment, members of Congress have demanded a string of U.N. spending and personnel cuts, a reduction in Washington's annual dues and other concessions.

"It has been a fun game for a long time to attack the U.N. ... but this could be the end of the line for the organisation and adversely affect our relationship with our allies," said Republican Senator Richard Lugar, of Indiana, who opposed the measure.

But committee chairman Senator Jesse Helms, a Republican from North Carolina, a fervent critic of the United Nations, and the panel's ranking Democrat, Senator Joseph Biden of Delaware, portrayed the bill as the best possible arrangement.

ment hammered out during four months' of detailed, bipartisan negotiations.

U.S. debts to the United Nations have been a running sore for years, with Washington accused by its closest allies of reneging on its financial commitments, but conservative Republicans refusing to pay an extra cent to what they call a spendthrift bureaucracy.

The Clinton administration has insisted to Congress that it must pay the debt if U.S. credibility at the United Nations is to be preserved.

The United Nations says the United States owes it more than \$1 billion in delinquent dues but Sen. Helms and Sen. Biden insisted Thursday \$819 million was "the drop-dead number."

A key condition for the payment is U.N. agreement to reduce the U.S. share of its regular budget to 20 per cent from the current 25 per cent in three years. The U.S. share of the peacekeeping budget would be cut to 25 per cent from 31 per cent.

Other conditions include a negative growth U.N. budget, a cap of \$900 million on U.S. payments to international organisations and a ban on global U.N. confer-

ences in cities other than New York. Geneva, Rome and Vienna — a slap at recent U.N.-sponsored events such as the Beijing Women's Summit and the Earth Summit in Rio De Janeiro.

Sen. Lugar, who sponsored an amendment to repay the U.S. debt in full without conditions, noted his effort had a "certain Don Quixote" desperation to it in view of the committee's bipartisan efforts to resolve the issue with the Clinton administration's acquiescence.

Senator John Kerry agreed with Sen. Lugar that the United States owed the money and should pay up without strings attached, but acknowledged that was unlikely to happen given the strong opposition from conservative Republicans led by Sen. Helms.

"I believe this will work, but I don't think it's the right thing to do," the Massachusetts Democrat said.

The measure, part of the State Department authorisation bill for 1998, must now be reconciled with a version passed by the House of Representatives before going to the Senate floor for a vote. Sen. Helms predicted that could come as early as next week.

## Clinton signs disaster bill after week's strife

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton signed a multibillion-dollar disaster aid bill into law Thursday after Congress stripped it of the political riders that prompted a presidential veto earlier in the week.

Mr. Clinton underlined his signature twice and raised his clenched fist, prompting applause from lawmakers attending the Oval Office ceremony, including Senator Byron Dorgan, a North Dakota Democrat, Senator Barbara Boxer, a California Democrat and Senator Paul Wellstone, a Minnesota Democrat.

"This bill provides the desperately needed resources for hundreds of thousands of people who have suffered terribly from the flooding and other natural disasters in the Dakotas, Minnesota, California and 29 other states," Mr. Clinton said in a statement released by the White House.

"When our people are in need, we Americans come to their assistance as one nation," the President said. Applauding Congress for stripping the legislation of political riders attached by Republicans.

Republican leaders of Congress, battered by a negative press and bound by lawmakers from flood-ravaged states, gave in to White House demands earlier Thursday and passed the full \$8.9 billion in the original bill.

The bill provides \$5.6 billion to help North and South Dakota and Minnesota recover from flood damage to homes and businesses and to aid 32 other states hurt by natural disasters. It also restores \$1.9 billion to military accounts to pay for past activities in Bosnia and the Gulf.

Mr. Clinton, who vetoed the first version of the bill Monday, praised Congress for its "common sense" in passing the disaster aid in a form he would sign into law.

In his veto message, Mr. Clinton had urged Congress to pass the bill again without the political riders attached by Republicans.

## Asia-Africa forum urges G-7 nations to step up assistance

BANGKOK (AFP) — An Asia-Africa development forum ended here Friday with a strong call to the world's leading industrialised nations to step up support for economic and social recovery in war-torn Africa.

Nearly 70 African, Asian and donor countries issued a joint statement to next week's Denver, Colorado, summit of the Group of Seven (G7) nations to "reinforce its development assistance to Africa, encourage investment and expand trade."

"I hope the Denver summit will not only revisit the issue of African development, but clearly demonstrate political will through practical and concrete action," said Pitak Intra-wiyannunt, the Thai deputy foreign minister.

The June 20 meeting, which will be joined by Russia, will include discussions on the economic and political situation in Africa following a call last year

from the G7 for global cooperation in African development.

Kobsak Chutikul, director-general of the Thai Foreign Ministry Economic Affairs Department said Asian countries had signalled their readiness to enter into new initiatives with industrialised nations and Africa.

"It's a very short message (to the Denver summit) ... just do what you have said you will do."

The three-day Asia-Africa forum — the second of its kind — brought together 44 African, 11 Asian and 12 donor countries to discuss ways of expanding trade, investment and development cooperation links between Asia and Africa.

It was organised by Japan, with Thailand, the United Nations Development Programme, and a U.S.-based non-governmental organisation, the Global Coalition For Africa. The first Asia-Africa

Forum was held in Indonesia in 1994.

Yasushi Kurokuchi, special assistant to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said civil wars and natural disasters had undermined progress in Africa as Asia's "tiger" economies had forged ahead.

Some 30 years ago, Asia and Africa were "more or less in the same economic bracket," he said.

Mr. Kobsak said that development in Africa was not a "hopeless cause," with a "critical mass" of African countries now embarked on economic reforms.

"We urge the international community to support them to maintain these positive trends of the past couple of years," he said.

"We feel that with the right levels of assistance and the right mix of policies and support, African nations can attain Asian levels of development."

## Student shot dead near Zaire army chief's funeral

KINSHASA (R) — A student was shot dead in Kinshasa during an altercation with a soldier in President Laurent Kabila's army on the sidelines of the funeral of Zaire's last army chief, witnesses said.

The incident, during which the student tried to wrest a gun from the soldier, sparked protests and about 50 fellow students entered Notre Dame Cathedral carrying the body and chanting "Kabila murderer," the witnesses added.

Protesting students set fire to at least two cars in the city centre after the killing, the first incident of its kind since Mr. Kabila's forces captured the city and toppled veteran dictator Mobutu Sese Seko on May 17, the witnesses said.

General Mabele Lieko Bokungu, one of the few senior officers in Mr. Mobutu's army to rise through the ranks on more than family connections, was killed by members of Mr. Mobutu's Presidential Guard on the eve of the capture of the city.

Gen. Mabele, 56, had made contact with Mr. Kabila's rebels in a bid to head off a bloody end to the seven-month civil war and had advised Mr. Mobutu to flee, saying the army could not hold the capital. Mr. Mobutu is now in exile in Morocco.

Thousands of Kinshasa residents turned out for Gen. Mabele's funeral in the cathedral.

His coffin was carried into the cathedral by officers of the former Zairean army, some of whom have now joined Mr. Kabila's forces. His wife, Marie-Jeanne, his children and dozens of other relatives and dignitaries of the Mobutu era followed.

Outside, thousands of Kinshasa residents sang and danced in tribute to the soldier who was widely respected by both his troops and members of the population for his courage in speaking out against tribalism and corruption in Mobutu's army.

Interior Minister Mwenze Kongolo represented Mr. Kabila. "He was a valiant soldier but also and above all a man of legendary generosity full of humility and love for his country," Mr. Mwenze said in a memorial address.

Meanwhile, President Kabila Thursday added six members to his government. Kinshasa Radio reported.

Of the six, five are ministers and one a vice minister.

Pierre-Victor Mpoyo was named minister of economy, industry and trade. Tshubaka Bisikuabo was charged with public works, and Tshibal Mutombo with youth and sports.

Eddy Angulu was handed the environment and tourism portfolio. Pierre Lokombe Kitete was named energy minister, and Milulu Mamboleo vice-minister of social affairs.

None of the nominees are well-known public figures.

In a separate development, mob justice is increasingly replacing the standard legal process in Kinshasa since the takeover of President Kabila, and a growing number of offenders are being lynched, apparently with the benediction of the new regime.

On Thursday, three people were "necklaced" — meaning doused in petrol and set on fire after tyres had been placed round their bodies, the official Voice of the People reported.

One victim was described as "a well known convict, who specialised in burglaries."

Two of the men lynched had "three or four tyres round their hips. The third, called Willy had only one. Willy ran away but soldiers shot him and he was burned by the mob," the radio said.

## Daughter: Castro a bad father and leader

MEXICO CITY (R) — Alina Fernandez Revuelta has accused Cuban President Fidel Castro of failing her personally as a father and the Cuban people in general as a leader.

Mrs. Fernandez Revuelta told Reuters in an interview that Mr. Castro certainly had his reasons as "the busiest father in Cuba," but that he was nonetheless an "unconcerned father."

Mrs. Fernandez, who escaped from Cuba disguised as a Spanish tourist in 1993 and now lives in the United States, was in Mexico to promote her autobiography, "Alina: Las Memorias De La Hija Rebelde De Fidel Castro," (Alina: Memoirs of Fidel Castro's Rebel Daughter).

The book is mainly a personal account, but contains a heavy dose of often critical observations on how Cuban society has fared since the revolution led by Mr. Castro in 1959.

"I go along with the revolution, through the eyes of the girl that saw it take power through to the woman who had to leave," Mrs. Fernandez said.

Alina Fernandez was born in Havana in 1956. Her mother, Nati Revuelta, met Fidel Castro in the early 1950s and worked clandestinely with other rebels who plotted to overthrow the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista.

Alina was registered under her mother's husband's surname, Fernandez. Nonetheless, her mother confessed when Alina was 10 years old that Fidel Castro, an occasional visitor to the Fernandez household, was her real father.

She said her book does not attempt to pass judgment, but admits she does not have a high opinion of Cuba's revolution.

"The only merit I do concede is in that first stage at the beginning of the revolution, which was so idealistic, so romantic and so driven to achieve social justice," she said.

Mrs. Fernandez said the Cuban Revolution lost its way and impoverished its people due to the cost of maintaining Cuban troops in Africa and supporting guerrillas in different parts of Latin America.

"What I don't like about this revolution is that it did nothing for Cubans," she said. "It has done everything for its public image and the international stage," she added.

After Mrs. Fernandez left Cuba in December 1993, it took the Cuban government 10 days to allow her teenage daughter, Mr. Castro's grandchild Alina Maria Salgado, to join her abroad.

Mr. Castro, 70, has always kept an extremely tight rein on his private life and almost never mentions even his personal feelings, let alone his family, in public.





Sri Lankan soldiers look at weapons left behind by Tamil Tiger rebels after a fierce raid on army defences on northern Vavuniya. The army has rushed reinforcements to rebuild defences breached in the raid. The army says it lost more than 100 soldiers in the attack and that more than 300 rebels were killed (Reuters photo)

## Sri Lanka battle enters 2nd month, toll exceeds 1,350

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lanka's biggest offensive against Tamil Tiger rebels entered its second month Friday with both sides placing their death toll at 1,350 killed and wounding more bloodshed.

The separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) offered their most ferocious resistance to the military onslaught by staging a devastating attack against an army base Tuesday.

Tiger guerrillas said they killed more than 325 soldiers in Tuesday's assault on the Thandikulam camp in the district of Vavuniya while the army placed rebel losses at over 400 killed.

"Tigers have the capacity to stage a couple of more attacks like this," a senior military field commander in Vavuniya said. "There will be more lives lost but we will keep up our offensive."

The Tigers too promised to inflict more casualties on government forces as they move deeper into the rebel heartland of Wanni in the island's north. Tigers said the

government was giving higher civilian losses to distract from military losses and prepare for further army set backs.

Asian diplomats said Tuesday's massive Tiger attack was a blow to both sides and the army's current offensive aimed at opening a key high through rebel territory will be delayed by about a month or two.

Tuesday's fighting was the bloodiest counter-attack against government forces since they launched the major drive code named "Sure Of Victory" into rebel-held territory on May 13.

Defence sources said the Tiger counterattack will considerably slow the military advance because an entire armory was blown up by the Tigers who attempted to cut off the advancing army column by hitting the tail.

"Our troops expected this attack and that is how they were able to repulse it and force them to beat a hasty retreat," Junior Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte said. "When they can't at-

tack the head they attack the tail."

Mr. Ratwatte, who is the key figure leading the government's drive against the Tigers, said he considered the "Tigers" to be "jackals" and vowed to open the main road to Jaffna despite rebel resistance.

The army has deployed two divisions or some 20,000 men to open the road to Jaffna, the former Tiger bastion which was captured by the army in December 1995.

Troops have advanced only about 15 kilometres and needed to cover another 60 kilometres, mostly through thick jungle terrain that favour guerrilla warfare.

Local residents in Vavuniya said life in the district was slowly returning to normal and shops were open after being shut Tuesday.

Before Tuesday's attack, at least 150 government soldiers and 410 Tiger rebels had been killed according to military estimates. The rebels say they lost under 100 cadres killed.

The Tigers said the army

drive has jointly planned by Sri Lankan and Pakistan military officials, a claim flatly denied by the Colombo government as well as Pakistan diplomats here.

"The Tigers tried to cut off our men and hit them badly," chief military spokesman Sarath Munasinghe said. "They failed and got a severe mauling. That is why Tigers are now trying to credit Pakistanis with the offensive."

As fighting raged in the north of the country, the rebels have also escalated their hit-and-run attacks in the east of the country.

At least five bus passengers, including two constables, were shot dead by the Tigers in the eastern district of Batticaloa Friday, local officials said.

Tiger guerrillas are campaigning for independence in the island's north and east. More than 50,000 people have been killed in the separatist conflict in the past 25 years.

## Khmer Rouge leader executes top comrade, flees

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot executed another guerrilla chief and fled his last remaining base with several hostages, Cambodia's first Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh said Friday.

The notorious leader of Cambodia's "killing fields" regime of the 1970s apparently rejected negotiations over the surrender of remaining rebels and ordered the execution of former Khmer Rouge Defence Minister Son Sen and his family for alleged espionage.

Mr. Son Sen and his relatives were killed and then cars were driven over their bodies, according to the Prince.

Mr. Pol Pot, accompanied by his "hostages" — nominal guerrilla leader Khieu Samphan, "Finance Minister" Mak Ben and "Minister of Territorial Integrity" Tep Khunnal — and 200 armed supporters, fled from Anlong Veng near the Thai border Wednesday, Prince Ranariddh said.

In Stem Reap, about 90 kilometres south of Anlong Veng, senior military commanders said fighting had broken out between rival

factions and that supplies and troops might be sent to assist the anti-Pol Pot side.

They said the sound of fighting had been heard from government forces' frontlines.

Prince Ranariddh, citing information from army Deputy Chief of Staff Nhiek Bun Chhay, said Mr. Pol Pot was being carried on a hammock and had intravenous drip tubes hanging from his arms.

Reports last year said Mr. Pol Pot, who has not been seen in public for years, was dead. But these were never confirmed.

Prince Ranariddh said Mr. Pol Pot's location was unknown but that a neighbouring "friendly country" — presumably Thailand — had sealed its borders and that Khmer Rouge renegades who supported negotiations with the government had surrounded the fleeing party.

Mr. Nhiek Bun Chhay went to the Anlong Veng area Thursday and the Prince said he returned to the region Friday with supplies for the renegades.

"First, Pol Pot agreed for Khieu Samphan to solve the (ongoing insurgency)

through national reconciliation, but he changed his mind," the Prince told reporters.

He said Mr. Pol Pot had then accused Mr. Son Sen of treason and espionage for being an agent of Second Prime Minister Hun Sen. He forced Mr. Khieu Samphan to read a statement about Mr. Son Sen on clandestine Khmer Rouge Radio.

"Then he killed Son Sen and his family, all of his children and drove cars over their bodies," the Prince said, adding that 11 people in all had been killed and that he had photographic evidence of the deaths. According to defence sources who have seen the photos, Mr. Son Sen was wearing white trousers and appeared to have been shot twice in the head. His wife, Yun Yat, was wearing light blue shirt and dark blue trousers. She was shot once in the head and once in the back.

Khmer Rouge Radio was silent Friday. Military sources said it appeared the radio station had been destroyed, reinforcing indications of a mounting crisis in the guerrilla leadership.

Prince Ranariddh's royalist FUNCINPEC Party has been negotiating with the hardline leadership to secure the surrender of their troops in exchange for top rebel leaders Mr. Pol Pot and Mr. Ta Mok to go into exile. The Prince has said such a deal would allow Mr. Khieu Samphan to form a legitimate political party that could join a royalist-led political alliance expected to oppose Mr. Hun Sen's former Communist Cambodian People's Party (CPP) in upcoming elections.

The Khmer Rouge were outlawed by 1994 legislation and Mr. Hun Sen has said any contact with the guerrillas before they completely split with Mr. Pol Pot and the hardline central leadership is illegal.

Some senior CPP members were cautious in their assessment of Prince Ranariddh's announcement. One military commander hinted that it could be a ruse to try to convince people that Mr. Khieu Samphan had split with Mr. Pol Pot.

The Prince defended the negotiations, saying no chance to end the Khmer Rouge should be wasted and saying he was acting not for himself or his party but for the whole country.

## U.S.: Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary can join NATO

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States has said that it favoured only the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to join NATO in the first round of new members to be invited to enter the Western security alliance.

The decision, formally presented by U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen at a NATO defence ministers meeting in Brussels, flies in the face of an effort by France, Italy and others to include Romania and Slovenia in the first wave.

White House spokesman Mike McCurry said Thursday the United States' stance was firm, that it would work to achieve consensus on the issue before the July NATO summit in Madrid that will formally invite new nations to begin membership negotiations, and that it did not expect to be overruled by its allies.

"We have said all along we would judge aspiring members by their ability to add strength to the alliance and their readiness to shoulder the obligations of NATO membership," Press Secretary Bill Clinton said in a statement read by Mr. McCurry.

"Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic clearly meet

those criteria and have... made the greatest strides in military capacity and political and economic reform," Mr. Clinton said.

"The first new members should not and will not be the last. We will continue to work with other interested nations, such as Slovenia and Romania, to help them prepare for membership," he added. "Other nations are making good progress and none will be excluded from consideration."

Expanding the 16-member North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) has been studied since 1994, but had been steadfastly opposed by Russia until this spring.

The alliance paved the way to its eastward expansion last month when Mr. Clinton, Russian President Boris Yeltsin and the other alliance members signed the "NATO-Russia founding act" to chart their future relations.

The U.S. stance was hailed by the three chosen nations.

"We welcome the U.S. support for our membership," Polish presidential spokesman Antoni Styrzula told Reuters in Warsaw, echoing statements by Hungarian and Czech officials. "This is happy news for the three states involved."

## Ireland's Robinson gets top U.N. human rights job

UNITED NATIONS (R) — President Mary Robinson of Ireland Thursday was named to the top U.N. human rights post by Secretary-General Kofi Annan who asked her to step down from the Irish presidency by September to take up the post.

Mrs. Robinson, a lawyer and human rights expert, had been the favourite for the Geneva-based post of U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights for several weeks and Mr. Annan called her an "extraordinary leader" who would bring "dynamism to the job."

But she does not end her seven-year term as president until Dec. 2. However, Mr. Annan said he had asked her to begin the Geneva-based U.N. post by the time the 52nd General Assembly session starts in September.

He said she understood the urgency of starting the job earlier but he did not say she had agreed to his terms. She will come to New York next month to discuss the issue.

The 165-member General Assembly must still endorse the appointment.

In Dublin, Mrs. Robinson, 53, said in a statement: "I deeply appreciate the trust and confidence which the secretary-general has placed in me."

"I am greatly indebted to all those who supported my candidature, especially to the Irish government and officials in the (Irish) Department of Foreign Affairs who spared no effort in promoting it."

Mr. Annan, in a news conference, said: "I have identified someone who is an extraordinary leader who has done lots of work in the human rights field and who



Irish President Mary Robinson

will bring dynamism, credibility and leadership to the human rights centre."

"And I have therefore decided to name Mrs. Mary Robinson as the next High Commissioner for Human Rights," he said.

He said he realised she was a sitting president. But he said it "would be preferable if she could assume her functions before the beginning of the 52nd session of the General Assembly. I believe Mrs. Robinson understands the urgency and the need to start as soon as she can."

Mrs. Robinson is known for championing the rights

of the poor, the oppressed and the underprivileged. As president of Ireland, she turned what was a largely ceremonial job of cutting the tape at flower shows and opening community centres into a focus for the injustices of the world.

Supported by Britain as well as U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Mrs. Robinson had faced some objections from Third World countries because she was a European. Mr. Annan said he would appoint a deputy shortly and the deputy would come from a developing country. The first reaction came

from Russia's ambassador Sergei Lavrov, this month's Security Council president. "She is a very well-known personality and had been mentioned as one of the candidates and I am sure she will be a very efficient international official."

The job, first proposed nearly 50 years ago, became vacant after Jose Ayala Laso resigned in March as the first human rights commissioner to become Ecuador's foreign minister.

He had been appointed in 1994 for four years and was criticised by several human rights groups for being too cautious on abuses by governments.

In Geneva, news of Mrs. Robinson's appointment was welcomed by staff at the U.N. Centre for Human Rights, who had hoped for a new chief who would speak out publicly on rights violations.

"It is fantastic. She will bring prestige to the post," said one employee.

Mrs. Robinson, an attorney with special expertise in constitutional and European human rights law, had pleaded landmark cases before the European commission.

She was the first head of state to visit Rwanda in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide there as well as the U.N. Tribunal on the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague.

Her closest competitor, Sonia Picado, Costa Rica's ambassador to Washington, was rejected late last month, making it nearly certain Mr. Annan would appoint Mrs. Robinson. Mrs. Picado, however, indicated she had been offered the deputy post but would not accept it. But she said she might work in another related U.N. human rights field.

## India says talks with Pakistan to start on June 19

NEW DELHI (R) — Senior Foreign Ministry officials from India and Pakistan will meet in Islamabad for talks from June 19 to 23, India's Foreign Ministry said Friday.

The talks between the neighbours' foreign secretaries, their seniormost career diplomats, will follow a rare meeting between their prime ministers in May and an earlier round of negotiations in March, which ended a tense three-year stand-off.

"The next round of foreign secretary-level talks will be held in Islamabad from June 19 to 23," a Foreign Ministry statement said.

Pakistan Thursday accused India of raising tension ahead of the talks, a charge New Delhi promptly denied.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan cited a recent alleged violation of Pakistani airspace, the reported deployment of Indian medium-range ballistic missiles near the border and a border clash Tuesday night.

An Indian Foreign Ministry spokesman reiterated New Delhi's denial that one of its jet fighters had flown over Pakistan earlier this month, breaking the sound barrier and rattling windows in Islamabad.

He also noted Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral's statement Wednesday denying that India had deployed ballistic missiles near to the border with Pakistan.

As for any border clash, the Foreign Ministry spokesman said: "India has been subjected to unprovoked firing on several occasions across the border."

The two countries have fought three wars since 1947.

## Tung deputy Chan warns Hong Kong against subverting China

HONG KONG (R) — Hong Kong's top official, who stays on after Beijing takes control on July 1, urged the British-ruled territory Friday against becoming a base for subversion against China.

Anson Chan, chief secretary, said: "We put our own autonomy at risk if we lead China's leaders to believe we are trying to undermine their system."

"You can be sure China will clamp down hard if it suspects we are allowing Hong Kong to be used as a base for subversive activities. Chinese action of this sort would be disastrous for Hong Kong," he wrote in an article in a new book about Hong Kong. "Hello Goodbye."

The outspoken Mrs. Chan, second in command to colonial Governor Chris Patten, is also to serve as deputy to future leader Tung Chee-hwa, and her remarks came as another twist in a tense debate over Hong Kong's future under Chinese rule.

Hong Kong, a British colony for 156 years, lowers the Union Jack and reverts to Beijing's control under the red flag of China at midnight on June 30, just 18 days away.

China has pledged to let the territory of 6.4 million keep its economic and political way of life unchanged for 50 years.

But it has set in motion plans to dissolve an elected legislature and replace it for a year with an unelected body, to reverse democratic reforms and water down political liberties, justifying the moves on grounds of "national security."

Mrs. Chan said the best way to protect Hong Kong's autonomy after the handover was to keep out of China's internal affairs.

"Minding our own business is the best guarantee of our autonomy. We cannot expect China to keep its nose out of our system if we stick our noses into theirs," she said.

However, Mrs. Chan, who has been outspoken too in defence of Hong Kong's traditional freedoms, also reminded Mr. Tung in her article of a need to win the hearts of the people.

"He must be mindful of Hong Kong's needs and aspirations. He has to convince Hong Kong's people that he is on their side, that he is, first and foremost, Hong Kong's man and will defend our interests. It is a difficult balance to strike."

Mr. Tung has lashed out at confrontational anti-Beijing protests, such as annual vigils commemorating China's 1989 anti-democracy crackdown, and has urged Hong Kong people to look to the future as part of China on a basis of consensus.

Hong Kong, where no confrontational politics or democracy existed a decade ago, has turned into heady political polemics in the run-up to the handover, mostly focused on fears of repressive Communist-style rule.

The High Court Thursday quashed a legal challenge by the Popular Democratic Party against the unelected legislature that China plans to install on July 1.

Mr. Patten urged future ruler China on the same day to adopt rather than meddle with the territory's successful system of free enterprise and democratic government.

Chinese dissidents exiled in Hong Kong have this week voiced fresh fears of persecution once Chinese sovereignty is restored.

At the same time a row has built up between Britain and China over Chinese demands to send People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops into the territory to take up defence positions in their garrison barracks before the formal midnight flag change.

"There is no question of Britain agreeing to the deployment of the main PLA garrison in Hong Kong before July 1," said British Foreign Office spokesman Bill Dickson.

"Britain is the sovereign power and is responsible for the defence of Hong Kong up to the last stroke of midnight on June 30 and that is when China assumes its sovereign responsibility."

China has announced it is sending President Jiang Zemin and Premier Li Peng to a glittery joint handover ceremony with 4,000 VIP guests, where Britain's top representatives will be heir to the throne Prince Charles and Prime Minister Tony Blair.

But the British and U.S. allies have declared they will boycott a ceremony to swear in the Provisional Legislature.

Australia Friday defended its decision to break ranks with the United States and Britain and attend the inauguration of Hong Kong's legislature on July 1.

Fending off criticism from the Labour opposition, Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer said Australia accepted China's promise to hold democratic elections within a year of regaining control of Hong Kong on July 1.

"In Hong Kong we have every expectation that there will be free and fair elections during the course of the next 12 months," he told reporters.

The appointed Provisional Legislature, replacing the elected chamber that Britain established in Hong Kong, will be sworn in on July 1 as soon as China resumes control of the territory after 156 years of British rule.

The United States said Tuesday that Secretary of State Madeleine Albright would attend the handover ceremony but not the swearing-in of the legislature.

Britain followed Wednesday by saying Prime Minister Tony Blair would also miss the legislature ceremony.

But Australian Prime Minister John Howard said Thursday that Australia would attend the ceremony because it needed to maintain a good economic relationship with China.

New Zealand Foreign Minister Don McKinnon said his country will attend the swearing-in of Hong Kong's new legislature next month and saw no need to antagonise China further by repeating its concern over the body.



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## Untimely interference

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein's immediate rejection of the recent resolution of the U.S. Congress declaration that Jerusalem is the united capital of Israel reflects not only the position of Jordan but that of the entire Arab and Muslim Worlds. The domestically-motivated declaration runs counter to the principled position of the whole international community, including the U.S. administration itself. The King rightly viewed the Congress's negative and compromising decision as an untimely one that would undermine the final status talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

Surely, after Israel agreed to discuss the final status of Jerusalem through negotiations with the Palestinians the matter is one for the two parties to agree upon, and certainly not the U.S. Congress. The Congress's warped and biased decision on Jerusalem was not the first of its kind, though. The Arab side and the international community faced similar resolutions on earlier occasions. These U.S. senators and congresspersons, it is all too obvious, have only one priority in mind: to be reelected even if at the expense of justice, if not common sense, and the long-term national interest of their country. Fortunately, whatever the representatives decide is not binding on President Bill Clinton and his administration and therefore is devoid of real significance.

Yet its ominous symbolism cannot go unnoticed. By acting in this way at this critical juncture in the peace process, the Congress has in effect poured fuel on an already raging fire in the region. Its decision demonstrates utter disregard for everything that has been painstakingly achieved over the past five years. Before adopting their position, the honourable members should have thought of its implications, especially since most of them, it is presumed, are aware of the complexity and significance of the conflict over the Holy City.

Should half of the population of Jerusalem be denied any recognition of their rights in a city that has been theirs for hundreds of years, we might ask the representatives, what standard of justice the congresspersons had in mind when they so callously interfered in the delicate future of Jerusalem?

It is now up to President Clinton to reassure the Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims that Washington is still committed to its principled position on Jerusalem and the various U.N. General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, which, inter alia, reject Israel's claim on Jerusalem and declared all its actions aiming to usurp the rights of others in it as totally illegal.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i expressed hope that Syria's decision to reopen its international borders with Iraq is not a tactical move but rather a determined attempt to end the differences between the two countries for good. Fahed Fanek said Syria closed the borders with Iraq in 1980, when Iraq and Iran were involved in war, and it did that in support of Iran's position: it also stopped the flow of Iraqi oil through its territory to the Mediterranean to weaken Iraq and subsequently received free of charge Iranian oil as a reward. Now, after 17 years of break in relations and enmity, Damascus has decided to move closer to Iraq but, regrettably, it has announced that it will be only doing that within the framework of the U.N. resolution that allows Iraq to purchase food and medicine in exchange of oil sales, noted the writer. By this announcement Damascus has given a sign that it is keen on having a piece of cake, like other countries, benefiting from supplying Iraq with its needs of medicine and food and so the move was commercially motivated and nothing else. The writer said Damascus ought to realise that by amending its ties with Baghdad and restoring normal relations with Iraq it stands to gain a great deal because such a move will strengthen its hand in the face of Turkey and Israel, both of which have ambitious and hostile designs in the Arab World in general and Syria in particular.

JIHAD MOMANI, a writer for Al Dustour, criticised the manifestation of affluence in Jordan which, he said, tends to adversely serve Jordan's appeal to the world for economic assistance. The writer said when foreign visitors and government leaders come to Jordan, they mainly see the fashionable districts of western Amman and are seldom taken to the poor villages and the rural areas where the needy are concentrated. Amman's streets are crowded with very expensive cars, many of which are wrecked by reckless driving, mainly on the part of the rich and the wealthy in Jordan who often outbid one another in showing off their richness through extravagant spending on food, cars, fashionable houses and many other things, he pointed out. The writer said that wealthy families, consisting of two or three members, often build or live in villas of several rooms, with swimming pools and served by more than a domestic help, at a time when many governorates lack sufficient water to drink. The writer said that such manifestations are conveyed by the visitors to their own countries' media and to foreign governments which often decide to reduce rather than increase their aid to Jordan.

## Jordanian Perspective

## Arabs should reach consensus regarding common interest and dealing with Israel

By Dr. Musa Keilani

JORDAN LAST week celebrated the anniversary of the Great Arab Revolt, a landmark that changed life in our part of the Arab World, stemming from our yearning to end foreign tutelage and set our aspirations and visions as the basis for our future. We in Jordan have lived true to the lofty principles of the Great Arab Revolt in the last eight decades and are determined to continue to do so.

Of course the realities and circumstances have changed dramatically since the revolt, but the core objective of the Arab awakening that led to an uprising against foreign domination in our region has not changed. And that is what we continue to fight. It is our destiny and fate, and we have to press ahead regardless of what others think.

But it is indeed disturbing to witness a situation among us that runs contrary to the very essence of Arab national interests, irrespective of whether someone respects the principles of the Great Arab Revolt or not.

For decades, Jordan has been talking about the need for sincere and genuine Arab solidarity that serves common Arab interests and forms a shield against external threats and plots against the Arabs. The talk did not come out of a vacuum; it came from the total and complete acceptance of the age-old concept of the strength in unity. But what we have received in return had been deception and lip-service from some of our brethren in the Arab World. The dream of a cohesive Arab position has always remained distant. If anything, petty differences among the Arabs actually distorted that dream and pushed it further away from realisation.

Today, as we confront the dramatic sweep of political and economic developments in the region, we cannot but

feel a sense of frustration over the wasted years and decades when we were naive to believe that the Jordanian vision of common Arab interests and a common Arab destiny was shared by all other Arabs. If the concept of Arab unity and solidarity against external threats were accepted and respected, then we would not be standing seemingly helpless today when an occupier dictates his terms on our fellow Arab Palestinian brothers. The best we have done so far is to threaten Israel that its interests of setting up ties with the Arab World would be undermined if it continued to reject the legitimate Arab, Palestinian and Muslim rights in Palestine. Of course, the process of normalisation with Israel has also been frozen by some countries. But that should be no consolation. Israel has lived without relations with the Arab World for so many decades now that it can wait for a few more years before the disunity among the Arabs grows to an extent that it can dust off its "divide and conquer" policy.

Beyond that, however, is Israel's conviction, obviously supported by Arab behaviour, that the concept of a united Arab voice and stand is only on paper and heard at occasional Arab meetings but never followed up. Israel has no compelling reason to take serious notice of Arab warnings or appeals because it knows very well those warnings and appeals are not going to materialise into concrete action.

Seen against that light, all the ongoing efforts to convince Israel and the Palestinians to resume their stalled "final status" negotiations have to take into consideration Israeli concerns rather than Palestinian interests and rights. And that is why these efforts are completely misplaced and give us all a sense of despair.

But that should not be a reason for us to abandon hope for regaining the legitimate Muslim, Arab and Palestinian rights. We have to realise that giving up completely on the Palestinian cause is precisely the kind of development Israel is waiting for. The few signs coming out of Israel that the Jewish state is willing to resume negotiations with the Palestinians, albeit on its own terms, are the direct impact of an Israeli realisation that there is still some Arab support and understanding left for the Palestinians.

The course forward is clear: The Arabs have to get together again; if not all the Arab leaders, then the few who have a genuine interest in serving the Palestinian cause. It might take a Herculean effort to convene even a mini-Arab summit now to discuss the fate of the Middle East peace process, but the effort has to be made and seen through. And that summit should rise above all petty inter-Arab differences and reach a point where it can be clearly decided what are the common Arab interests in the context of the Palestinian problem as well as the deadlocked Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli tracks.

However, a decision is simply not enough; it has to be implemented and adhered to. This is the challenge facing all Arabs who profess keen interest in supporting the Arab, Muslim and Palestinian rights in the Arab-Israeli equation. The question is: Are they capable of realising and recognising the simple truth that it is their own squabbling that has led to Israel's not only occupying Arab lands but also arrogantly telling the Arabs how they should behave and what they should do at the "peace" negotiations?

## Arab autocracy — 'perpetual'?

CAIRO — Algeria's vote on June 5 may do little more than legitimise the army-backed regime's control. Yet the election stands out in the Arab World, partly because of its rarity. Democracy's advance, almost everywhere except the Middle East, makes the 22 members of the Arab League look ever more behind the times. No Arab head of state (except in Lebanon) has changed by democratic means for a generation: the average tenure of an Arab leader is 22 years.

Not that Arab countries lack democratic institutions. But their various parliaments and consultative councils are, with few exceptions, pretty toothless. In some countries, such as Saudi Arabia, rulers simply appoint the members of these bodies. In others, such as Syria, Egypt and Tunisia, the ruling parties crush the life out of the legal opposi-

tion. Parliaments in Morocco, Jordan, Kuwait and Yemen offer a more pluralistic face, but even they operate under severe constraint. Defence and intelligence budgets, foreign policy and perks for rulers are closed to debate.

Most Arab countries hold elections. Yemen, one of the poorest but also the most egalitarian, elected a new parliament in April. International observers were favourably impressed but, predictably, voters returned the ruling party to power with a bruising majority.

Egypt is a master at the art of electoral manipulation: when it sent observers to oversee last year's Palestinian election, voters in Gaza joked that the winner was sure to be Egypt's President Mubarak. Its election record, says a European Union observer, is "exceptionally awful." Twice in the

past 15 years, Egyptian courts have forced dissolution of parliament by ruling that election procedures were unconstitutional. After the latest election, in November 1995 (in which 50 people were killed), losing candidates went to court to contest the results in more than half the 444 seats. Fraud, ballot-stuffing and voter intimidation have all been proved, but the People's Assembly now says that, since its members enjoy parliamentary immunity, only it has the right to expel them.

Not surprisingly, a recent survey found 66 per cent of Egyptians "uninterested" in politics. Turnout for municipal council elections last month was less than 20 per cent — and pro-government candidates won 99.6 per cent of the seats. Tunisia's ruling party won a modest 98.5 per cent of seats at similar elections in 1995.

Morocco's score, at elections on June 13, could be more seismic.

Why has democracy failed in the Arab World? Several explanations are offered.

• Arabs have some of the highest birth rates and lowest literacy rates in the world. The old generation clings to power for fear of being swamped. Low literacy is a barrier to political participation.

• The stakes are high. Arab countries hold 60 per cent of the world's oil reserves, and their governments control this wealth. Giving up political power means relinquishing economic power. It is no coincidence that countries without oil — Morocco, Jordan and Lebanon, for instance — have relatively stronger democratic institutions.

• European colonialism endowed Arabs with an urban upper class culturally inclined to the West and out

of touch with its own hinterland. Democracy has not been in the interest of these people — nor, often, of their western allies.

• The Arab World has not, or not yet, had its version of the Reformation, which opened the way to western democracy.

Until modern times, Islam provided the sole political framework in Arab societies. By necessity, opposition movements adopted religious guise. When they won, as did the Wahabi sect that now dominates Saudi Arabia, they were called orthodox. When they lost, they were deemed heretics — nowadays, terrorists — and bounded to the margins of society.

By leaning on Islam for legitimacy, say Arab secularists, governments automatically assume an anti-democratic bias. They become beholden to the idea that scripture, not experi-

ence, is the source of truth. "The role of thought is thus to explain and transmit, proceeding from a belief in this truth, and not to search and question in order to arrive at new, conflicting truths," writes a Syrian poet, known as Adonis.

Arab liberals accuse modern Islamists of threatening democracy by trying to shift the debate back to the narrow ground of scripture. A greater danger may come from those long-enduring regimes which claim that their autocratic rule is already democratic. Libya's leader, Muammar Qadhafi, has run the world's "more peculiar" democracies, argues that the term comes from Arabic, not Greek, roots: the words dama, meaning to remain, and kursi, a chair. In other words, perpetual occupation of the throne.

The Economist

## THE WEEK IN PRINT

## U.N. report condemns Israel's practices, human rights violations

REVIEWED BY ELIA NASRALLAH

WRITERS FOR the daily press last week highlighted issues connected with the Middle East peace process. Turkey's invasion of Iraqi territory and domestic affairs.

A writer for Al Aswaq commented on the outcome of a visit to Jordan and the region by a U.N. fact-finding mission which has filed a report last week condemning Israel's atrocities and pointing out the numerous human rights violations committed against the Palestinians in Israeli-held Arab lands.

Rashid Hassan quoted parts of the report as saying that the Israelis now detain 8,000 Palestinians, up from 3,300 before the signing of the Oslo deal, that Israel confiscated 93 per cent of the lands within the Jerusalem area so far and increased to 145,000 the number of Jewish settlers now living in the occupied Arab lands, up from 96,000 before Oslo.

The writer said the report clearly points out that since the Oslo accord, Israel has stepped up illegal measures against the Palestinians and increased the number of Jewish settlement programmes in the Palestinian lands.

Fakhri Kassar, a writer for Al Ra'i, referred to another aspect of the U.N. fact-finding mission's report

which stated clearly that the Israeli authorities have injected 300 Palestinian children with the HIV virus, that develops into the killer disease AIDS, in a bid to annihilate the Palestinian nation.

Apart from the illegal measures, human rights violations and other atrocities which Israel has been committing against the Palestinians, the report said that the HIV virus is one of the latest measures undertaken by the Israelis to dispose of the Palestinian people in the most barbaric manner ever witnessed in mankind's history.

Of course the Israelis have denied the U.N. report, but observers who have been following up Israel's practices over the past half a century believe this report because Israel's appalling behaviour throughout the past points to the evil nature of its people that drives them to commit all kinds of evil deeds against humanity, the writer concluded.

Taher Adwan, a writer for Al Dustour, attacked the United States for continuing to provide an umbrella for Israel's inhuman practices and violations.

Referring in particular to a recent U.N. General Assembly resolution demanding that Israel pay compensation to the U.N. and Lebanon for its air raid on a U.N. position in southern Lebanon, which killed

105 Lebanese civilians, the writer said that the U.S. has exposed its inhuman face by opposing the U.N. resolution and by threatening Lebanon for its demanding compensation.

The writer said that this immoral and unethical American stand underlines the fact that Washington has never been neutral in the Arab-Israeli conflict, that it continues to encourage the Israelis to pursue their inhuman practices, to defy the world community's resolutions and to pursue their drive to maintain their occupation of Arab lands.

The writer said that the American decision only helped to further discredit the United States in the eyes of the Arab masses.

A writer for Al Ra'i tackled the question of agents who were in the practice of selling Arab lands in Palestine to Israeli organisations, saying that perhaps the spate of killings could mark the beginning of a new, secret war by the Palestinians against the Israeli occupation.

Perhaps the Palestinians, seeing the closure of their regions continuing and witnessing stepped up Israeli atrocities against them, are resorting to this kind of war, said Mohammad Daoud.

The writer said that perhaps the Palestinians are resorting to these actions as a new facet of the intifada which many Palestinians

are calling for anew to force Israel to halt its atrocities against the Palestinians.

At the same time, the liquidation of the agents, he added, could offer the Palestine authority a new trump card in its struggle against one of the most ferocious Israeli governments to date.

A writer for Al Dustour said that the Arabs, and especially the Palestinians, can never forget June 5, 1967, when the West Bank and the Gaza Strip fell to the Israelis.

Thirty years have elapsed since the occupation of the Palestinian territories, causing increased pain to the Arab masses, but remembering this date with deep pain can never restore rights and lands, said Hazem Nuseibeh, who urged the Arabs to instil in the hearts of the youth, in schools and other institutions, the love for Palestine and the desire to struggle to regain Arab rights there.

What is required now from the Arabs, said the writer, is not mere feelings of sadness over the loss, but carrying out a general overhaul of their social, economic and political life and rising up in concert to close the military and other gaps separating them from Israel and its source of power, in order to confront this formidable enemy and wrench their rights.

Discussing the Turkish invasion of northern Iraq, a writer for Al Ra'i said that this unprecedented attack by Turkey on Iraq has exposed Ankara's ambitious designs in the Arab World.

It is true that the Turks might have achieved some gains by liquidating many of the Kurdish rebels, but Ankara has also lost a great deal in terms of its relations with the Arab and the Muslim World and created dip rifts within the Islamic World, said Mohammad Kharoub.

The writer said that the aggression, which came soon after the conclusion of a Turkish-Israeli military alliance and the decision to hold Turkish-Israeli-U.S. military exercises, has damaged Ankara's ties with the Arab World and created a new, explosive situation in the region.

Saleh Qallab, a writer for Al Dustour, described Turkey's aggression on Iraq, coupled with the Turkish military onslaught on the Islamists in Turkey, as an apostasy and a retreat from Islam.

The writer said that the Turkish military's stand against the Islamic institutions in Turkey, their war on Muslim nations and their open attack on Muslims raising the banner of jihad are considered as a war on the Islamic faith.

Referring to reports regarding action by the Turkish military against the

Islamic schools teaching the Koran, the imams in the mosques and other Islamic facets as a war by infidels against Islam, requiring from all Muslims to rise against them.

The writer said that Muslims everywhere have a duty to fight the apostate and prevent further attacks on Arabs and Muslims inside and outside Turkey.

A writer for Al Ra'i demanded that the Jordanians support non-governmental organisations that are trying to protect the environment in Jordan.

Protecting the environment does not only involve prevention of pollution to air, water and soil, but also seeking to protect the social environment and boosting the country's development programmes, said Ahmad Mislch.

The writer said that the protection of the natural resources is closely connected with protection of the human society. It is natural for non-governmental and social institutions to have a role in providing protection against pollution because it is the society which is to benefit from any gains made in the social and economic fields, he said, adding that Jordan has perhaps succeeded in curtailing pollutants to the air and soil but so far only timid moves have been made to ensure the protection of the social environment.



## Crown Prince assured...

(Continued from page 1)

expected to hand over the premiership to his coalition partner Tansu Ciller later this month, promised to continue support for Arab and Islamic rights and especially on the issue of Jerusalem and the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people.

Asked at a press conference upon concluding the visit about whether Jordan's and Turkey's positions were different on the incursion, the Crown Prince said consultations and active engagement among friendly states should continue even if there are differences.

"We believe that Iraq's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity are essential for developing interdependence, or cooperation, in the region," said the Crown Prince. "This is the message that I will be taking to the U.S.," added Prince Hassan who stressed the need to end the suffering of the Iraqi people and the Iraqi government's compliance with U.N. resolutions.

Asked at the press conference whether he was playing a mediating role between Turkey and the Syrians, whom the Turks accuse of supporting the PKK rebels, the Crown Prince said Jordan was not asked to intervene. "While His Majesty the King has good relations with President Hafez Assad... and (the two leaders) conferred recently over the phone, the

question of mediation was not brought up either explicitly or implicitly."

While Prince Hassan did not disclose to the journalists the substance of the Turkish leaders' briefing to him on the situation in northern Iraq, including setting a date for withdrawal, he nevertheless expressed hope that the operation would end soon.

"The date of pulling out from Iraq depends on finishing the job," Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry Omar Oymen, told Jordanian journalists accompanying the Crown Prince. "The territory that we've cleaned up is now being handed to the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) which is led by Masoud Barzani."

Mr. Oymen, who attended the talks on the Turkish side, revealed that "before the Gulf war Turkey and Iraq had agreements on curbing the activities of the PKK, which is said to be backed by the Iranians as well."

"This time, however, the Iraqis declined to go into another agreement we offered them. They simply said that they could not take it because they did not have a military presence in the north," he said.

"Turkey, more than any other country, has advocated the territorial integrity of Iraq. Otherwise there will be an independent Kurdish state, which neither we nor anybody else want."

In his press conference,

Crown Prince Hassan was asked about Jordan's views on Israeli-Turkish military cooperation.

He said: "I don't know whether I would necessarily welcome a comment from Turkey on Jordanian-Israeli relations. Some of the rather more sinister speculation about some form of substantive cooperation among Jordan, Israel, Turkey, Egypt is mere speculation. What you know in the public domain is what's really there."

The Jordanian and Turkish leaders also discussed bilateral and regional cooperation, whether in the economic or water fields.

"Specific joint projects were brought up and discussed, and we hope that progress could be made soon on their implementation," said Deputy Prime Minister Jawad Anani, who accompanied the Crown Prince on his visit here.

Prime Minister Erbakan had expressed Turkey's desire to increase the volume of trade between the two countries, saying that "out of \$5.6 billion volume (of Turkish exports), Jordan imported only \$80 million of Turkish goods."

"We have to do better than that between two friendly states with much in common," he said.

The Crown Prince arrived in London on Thursday evening, en route to the U.S. where he will be meeting President Bill Clinton and senior administration officials.

## King calls on Israel...

(Continued from page 1)

and legislative spheres. "During the past few decades, we in Jordan have made great strides at all levels of life, whether political, economic, social or legislative," the King said.

Reviewing Jordan's efforts to adjust to the new changes and to achieve self-reliance, King Hussein said: "Our economic restructuring programme is a manifestation of economic adaptability and our willingness to achieve the highest possible degree of self-reliance with a well-balanced, flexible and competitive environment to ensure a smooth transition to higher levels of economic activity."

Referring to Jordan's achievements in the area of human rights, King Hussein said Jordan had ratified six of the main seven conventions concerning human rights, the latest of which was the convention on the minimum age for work.

Also on Friday, King Hussein met with the ILO Director General Michel Hansenne and discussed with him scopes of bilateral cooperation in the fields of labour. King

Hussein and Mr. Hansenne emphasised the need to adhere to the international conventions organising work and work conditions, particularly those related to the employment of children and women, and people with special needs.

The issues of poverty and unemployment also came under discussion during the meeting which was attended by Her Majesty Queen Noor.

King Hussein also met with President of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) Bill Jordan and other labour union leaders, as well as a group of graduates from Queen Victoria, who are taking part in the 85th ILO conference.

The meetings were also attended by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh, ministers of Foreign Affairs, planning, industry, trade and supply and Jordan's representative to the Geneva based U.N. office.

## Iraq blocks 3 more arms inspections

(Continued from page 1)

on Thursday, armed Iraqis at a road checkpoint informed the team that they were not allowed to enter a "sensitive" area.

The inspectors abandoned the mission and attempted to travel to another facility, where they were stopped for the same reason, Mr. Duelfer said.

Another similar incident occurred on Tuesday, he added, without giving further details.

"When the Iraqis were told that such actions were in violation of U.N. resolutions, they said they had instructions from Tareq Aziz," the Iraqi deputy prime minister, another UNSCOM official said.

Iraqi Ambassador Nizar Hamdoun denied that the Iraqi actions signalled a toughened stance by Baghdad.

"It's a provocation by the commission, which is pushing harder," he said, noting that Mr. Ekeus was due to be replaced at the end of the month after six years as UNSCOM chief.

Mr. Hamdoun said the commission had "no need to inspect these

presidential sites which had already been visited twice before."

Mr. Duelfer said that the commission was "pushing hard because we have to push hard. If there wasn't so much resistance we wouldn't have to push hard."

The latest incidents come as the U.N. Security Council is discussing a reaction to Iraqi interference with four U.N. helicopters monitoring military sites in Baghdad last week.

UNSCOM officials appear concerned that the latest challenges to the U.N. inspectors signal a pattern of violations similar to a series of stand-offs last year.

In last week's incidents, Iraqi officials on board U.N. helicopters forced the four missions to abort by manhandling the crew, according to Mr. Ekeus.

Iraq says that the helicopters violated Iraqi sovereignty by overflying sensitive "presidential sites" which Iraq has declared out of bounds to the U.N. monitors.

But the United Nations insists on immediate, unconditional and total access for its inspectors.

Mr. Ekeus informed the council that the Iraqi

appeared to be acting on "a deliberate decision to hinder" or even render ineffective the U.N. helicopter operations.

Chilean-supplied helicopters carry out aerial surveillance to ensure that documents or equipment are not removed as the U.N. inspectors enter suspect Iraqi sites.

UNSCOM is monitoring Iraqi compliance with U.N. disarmament resolutions governing sanctions which were imposed following the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. UNSCOM must certify that Iraq has destroyed all its chemical, biological and long-range missiles before a crippling oil embargo can be lifted.

The latest incidents also come two weeks before Mr. Ekeus, a Swedish national, is replaced on July 1 as UNSCOM chairman by Australian Ambassador to the United Nations Richard Butler, an eminent arms control expert.

## U.N. General Assembly...

(Continued from page 1)

Some 105 people died in the Israeli shelling of the U.N. compound at Cana in April last year, which according to a U.N. report was deliberate. Lebanese civilians were sheltering at the Cana camp during Israel's "Grapes of Wrath" operation against Iranian-backed Hizbollah guerrillas in Lebanon.

Israeli Charge D'affaires David Peleg insisted that Hizbollah guerrillas operating in the area should be blamed for the Israeli attack.

"The terrorists and their patrons should be held fully accountable for such mis-

deeds. Israel rejects this resolution in both letter and spirit and is bound by no legal and moral obligation to assume responsibility for reimbursing the amount" referred to in the resolution, Mr. Peleg said.

U.N. General Assembly resolutions are not legally binding, but carry moral and political weight.

The General Assembly also voted on the specific paragraph stipulating that the damages "shall be borne by Israel." That vote produced 66 in favour, the same two against, while 59 abstained.

Western diplomats noted that European countries such as Britain, France and

Germany were making a political statement by abstaining on the controversial paragraph.

Lebanese Ambassador Samir Mubarak hailed the adoption of Friday's resolution as "not a victory just for Lebanon, but a victory for the credibility of the United Nations, international law and as well as the cause of international peace and security."

Lebanese government officials said Friday that hours before the vote, Lebanon rejected a U.S. proposal to remove the reference to Israel's responsibility for the Cana attack.

## Arab World condemns Congress

(Continued from page 1)

shown themselves to be tools of the Jewish lobby who defend its interests more than the true and vital interests of the American people," it added.

"It should lead Arab supporters of the peace process, especially in the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) leadership, to stop running behind a fantasy of peace and the return of our rights through negotiations," it said.

The House of Representatives on Tuesday passed by a vote of 406-17 a non-binding resolution recognising Jerusalem as the "united capital" of Israel and set aside \$100 million to move the U.S. embassy there from Tel Aviv. The resolution will now go to the Senate.

The administration of U.S. President Bill Clinton opposes the measure, saying it could hurt the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians.

The United States, like most of the world, has never recognised Israel's annexation in 1967 of east Jerusalem, which the Palestinians want as the capital of an independent state.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said that the vote in the U.S. Congress threatens to further unravel the peace process.

The decision "is unwise particularly when it comes at a time when the peace process faces a crisis," Mr. Mubarak was quoted as saying Thursday by Egypt's Middle East News Agency.

Mr. Mubarak made his remarks during a news conference late Thursday with Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi in the seaside Libyan town of Tobruk, where he arrived Thursday.

Syria on Friday condemned the resolution passed by the U.S. House of Representatives saying it endangered the already fragile peace process in the region. "This resolution shows how lightly the legitimate rights of the Arabs are taken and puts the peace process in danger," said Al Baath, the newspaper of Syria's ruling party. It said the non-binding resolution adopted Tuesday was "the worst form of racism because it demonstrates a deep hostility to the Arabs as human beings." It would also "encourage Israel to pursue its policy of aggression and expansion and to reject a just peace in the region," Al Baath wrote.

## First Jordanian satire, Abed Rabbo, folds...

(Continued from page 1)

before the courts — one is a personal suit brought by a government official, another from a parliamentarian and finally, one from a citizen who filed a suit after Abed Rabbo published a "sentence that was perceived to be anti-religious in sentiment."

Mr. Ghishan denies, however, that Abed Rabbo has exceeded public mores or has slandered officials or citizens.

"We don't get involved in moral issues," he said

during an interview with the Jordan Times. "We write satire about public figures — satire cannot be considered slander."

"Satire is simply to laugh at the misery of the world as we know it," he said, "as long as we are unable to deal with such misery save through laughter — it's the first spark against the taboos established by authority. It removes the halo from authority, whether through cartoons or words."

"I believe that Jordanians understood (Abed

Rabbo)," he said. "It was the government, particularly this government, that couldn't bear it," he said.

Abed Rabbo circulates approximately 20,000 copies weekly in Jordan and an undisclosed number in countries abroad, including UAE, Lebanon, Oman, Greece, Egypt and the United States. It employs a staff of 15, and a number of writers and journalists contribute to the paper on a freelance basis.

In its final salute to the government, today's edi-

torial declares that Abed Rabbo "could not be a false witness to a martial democracy, which is worse than the old dictatorships: the latter did not kill in the name of the homeland or rape democracy in the name of democracy or murder justice with the sword of justice."

"The blood of the slain Jordanian, Abed Rabbo, is upon you... can the slain mock his slayer?"

"Yes, and he who does not believe that should have a look at Abed Rabbo."

## Fears of new Israeli-Palestinian violence

(Continued from page 1)

police did not keep order, it would act.

"They fired live ammunition in the air, teargas and rubber bullets at the crowd," a witness told Reuters. He said Israeli soldiers also beat demonstrators before Palestinian police stepped in to hold protesters back.

Israeli military sources said soldiers and Palestinian police dispersed hundreds of rock-throwing demonstrators.

An elderly Palestinian died at a protest tent on the site apparently from a heat attack, a doctor at the Khan Younis hospital said. He said he could not say if the man had been affected by the teargas.

At the Gush Katif block of Jewish settlements in another part of the Strip, Palestinians stoned Israelis at a ceremony dedicating a memorial to an Israeli soldier killed in clashes in September, witnesses said.

Khaled Abu Ila, a Palestinian officer, told Reuters that during the clash a "young settler" fired his weapon randomly, wounding two more Palestinians.

"Jewish settlers fired towards rock-throwers. There were no casualties," the Israeli army said.

Israeli military officials accused the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) of inciting clashes between protesters and Israeli troops.

Those rumblings of unrest coincided with increasing Palestinian frustration with the lack of progress made by an Egyptian effort to mediate a resumption of peace negoti-

ations with Israel after a three-month break.

Egyptian envoy Osama Al Baz met separately Thursday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, but returned to Cairo without having brought the two sides together.

Top Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erakat told AFP on Friday it was too early to declare the Egyptian effort a failure, but said Mr. Baz's shuttle had "collided with Israeli intransigence."

Palestinian information minister, Yasser Abed Rabbo, accused Mr. Netanyahu of purposefully foiling the Egyptian initiative in a bid to allow the Americans to take over and pressure the Palestinians to make concessions.

"Mr. Netanyahu has closed the door to the Egyptian initiative. The Israelis, with American support, are manoeuvring to make the Egyptian effort fail," said Abed Rabbo.

Only Mr. Netanyahu, whose decision to start work on a new Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem in March plunged Middle East peace-making into crisis, seemed confident the impasse could be broken.

"I am convinced that within a short time we will overcome all the obstacles and resume the peace process with our Palestinian neighbours in order to accelerate the talks on a permanent peace settlement," he said in a speech on Thursday.

Mr. Netanyahu, who spoke in northern Israel after meeting Egypt's envoy Mr. Al Baz in Tel

Aviv, has proposed moving immediately into so-called final-status talks that would tackle issues such as Jewish settlements and the future of Jerusalem.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak launched his initiative after three missions by U.S. envoy Dennis Ross failed to bring the two sides back to the negotiating table.

With a void on the diplomatic front, the top Israeli military liaison with the Palestinians, General Yaakov Or, accused the PNA of attempting to stoke "mini-crises" to pressure Israel on the ground.

Gen. Or contacted Palestinian officials this week and warned them that "kind of behaviour will lead to violence," his spokesman Shlomo Dror told AFP.

"The Palestinians are using anything as an excuse to provoke incidents and create a tense atmosphere. This is in connection to their political moves," Mr. Dror said.

"But once you start tension you never know where it will end," he said.

Israel has warned of a harsh response if there is a repeat of riots which erupted last September when Palestinian street protests turned into fire fights between Israeli soldiers and armed Palestinian police.

A total of 71 Palestinians and 15 Israeli soldiers died in that fighting. The Israeli army has threatened to send tanks to take control of self-rule areas in the West Bank and Gaza if fighting escalates again.

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## Prices of summer fruit, some vegetables likely to rise

## Farmers have chance to diversify output, improve quality, Lawzi says

By Samir Ghawi  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Under the climate of price liberalisation, Jordanian farmers have the incentive and the opportunity to secure higher income by improving the quality of their produce. Agricultural Marketing Organisation (AMO) Director General Salem Lawzi told the Jordan Times.

Dr. Lawzi explained that the retailers were the main beneficiaries under the price fixing method which was abolished last month, as their profitability margin was high.

"Retailers have the motive now to offer discounts when their sales are low, whereas it would not have made a difference if

the products were dumped, in the past, if it could not be sold the same day," Dr. Lawzi pointed out.

In addition to improving quality, the agricultural expert indicated, the price liberalisation system would encourage farmers to introduce new products to the local market as well as to export markets. He mentioned crops, such as the asparagus, broccoli, and some types of green pepper

required by European markets, noting that the Jordan Valley is the "natural greenhouse of the world" as it enjoys a unique climate in the winter season.

Dr. Lawzi highlighted the importance of good quality produce by pointing out that Jordan exports between 6,000 and 7,000 tonnes of fresh vegetables each year.

"This amount represents only two per cent of our

total exports, but it provides us with eight per cent of the income from agricultural exports," he indicated.

As such, the benefit the price liberalisation would bring "is the opportunity to intensify the investments to increase the output and diversify the produce needed in European markets."

The AMO chief also stressed the post-harvest activities as being of high importance. He listed the

packing, grading, precooling and storing as being elements of the marketing process that ensure increased sales and higher income.

"The flotation of prices should incite the Jordanian farmers to respond to the requirements of local and outside markets," he stressed.

"As for the volume of exports, it depends largely on the investments that will

be made in order to produce the types required by European markets during the winter season," he explained.

Dr. Lawzi concluded the interview by advising the public in advance that prices of summer fruits and some vegetables will be rising this season above the average in previous years due to the frost and low temperatures during the month of April.

## Exemptions from customs, income tax total JD360m for 300 projects in '96, '97

By Tareq Ayyoub  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Around 250 projects have benefited from the investment promotion law as they were exempted from custom and income tax totalling JD300 million in 1996 last year, Elias Farraj, deputy director of the Investment Promotion Corporation, said Friday.

Mr. Farraj added that around 50 projects have also benefitted from the law in the first few months of 1997 with customs exemptions totalling JD60 million.

He told the Jordan Times that projects that have benefitted from

this law were mainly in the sectors of industry, agriculture, hotels, hospitals and maritime transportation and railways.

The law, which was modified and implemented from last year and which gives customs and income tax exemptions, is aimed at encouraging domestic and foreign investments in Jordan.

According to the law, no customs duties are levied on all fixed assets of the project for three years and only 15 per cent duty is levied on spare parts.

The income tax exemptions were divided into three categories:

Areas overcrowded with factories were Classified "A" and were assigned 25 per cent exemption of the total amount levied as tax income.

Income tax exemption of 50 per cent was given to Category "B" which includes areas that are less crowded and a 70 per cent exemption was allowed for category "C" which covers all other areas.

Industry, Trade and Supply Minister Hani Mulki said last week that, in cooperation with Ministry of Finance, his ministry is working to finalise a list of raw material and industrial inputs that will be given

gradual exemption from customs as a first step towards a complete exemption for production inputs.

Dr. Mulki, who was addressing a group of Jordanian exporters last week, said that the ministry is working on increasing custom exemptions for foreign investors to encourage them to invest in the Kingdom.

Arabic dailies said that new custom exemptions will be announced this week for industrialists to encourage domestic industry. No details were immediately available on the size of this exemption.

## Jordanians advised to select right products, adopt proper strategies to boost exports

By Francesca Ciriaci  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan needs to identify the products which have a selling potential on foreign markets, and should adopt proper marketing strategies if the Kingdom wants to boost its exports, U.S. and Jordanian businessmen agreed on Thursday.

Instead of dispersing resources trying to export to industrialised countries goods which have poor chances to be competitive with those countries' local products, Jordanians should focus on marketing typical and unique products.

The Dead Sea salts and all cosmetic, therapeutic

derivative products, carpets, together with other traditional handicrafts, as well as Arabic food, could have the lion's share in the Kingdom's exports abroad, said Jordan Trade Association (JTA) Managing Director Khalim Abu Rahmeh.

Speaking to the Jordan Times at the end of a roundtable between JTA representatives and a 10-member visiting delegation from the U.S. National Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Abu Rahmeh said the two parties discussed ways and means to boost trade ties.

They also stressed the need for Jordanian producers to select distribution companies in the U.S., he

said, in order to effectively market the Kingdom's products overseas.

"It is important to identify the proper channels for marketing. That means finding the proper distributors and agents," he said.

The meeting, which Mr. Abu Rahmeh described as "fruitful and successful," constituted a follow-up to the contacts made on the occasion of the Jordanian products' exhibition held in the U.S. in February 1996.

Central Bank statistics show that there is much room for improvement in the trade volume between the two countries: In 1996, Jordanian-U.S. trade volume was approximately one fourth of Jordanian-

European trade volume.

In 1996, Jordanian exports to the U.S. totalled JD13.7 million, while the Kingdom's exports to the EU in the same year neared JD87 million.

Domestic exports to the U.S. were JD14.7 million in 1995, and JD8.9 million and JD7.2 million in 1994 and 1993, respectively.

As for Jordan's imports from the U.S. in 1996, they amounted to JD295 million, while the Kingdom's imports from the EU totalled JD963.6 million.

The Kingdom's imports from the U.S. were JD240.5 million in 1995, JD232.5 million in 1994 and JD193.3 million in 1993.

## REUTERS

## REUTERS

## The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.7160	0.6116	1.4375	111.16	1.3888	1689.70	1.9295	5.3005	
DE Mark	0.5828	-	0.3561	0.8370	64.79	0.8078	984.56	1.2444	3.3807
GB Sterling	1.6350	2.8070	-	2.3501	161.68	2.2674	2764.01	3.1559	9.4885
CH Franc	0.8957	119.33	0.4250	-	77.31	0.9644	1175.85	134.30	4.0360
JP Yen	0.0090	1.5421	0.5496	1.2922	-	1.2470	16.21	173.59	6.2192
CA Dollar	0.7211	N/A FL	N/A FL	N/A FL	1.25	-	N/A FL	N/A FL	N/A FL
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0140	0.3611	0.0849	1523.93	0.8195	-	11.41	3.4295
NL Guilder	0.5183	88.91	0.3166	74.46	57.53	0.7183	875.79	-	3.0062
FR Franc	0.1724	0.2958	0.1053	24.7464	19.14	0.2388	33.25	33.2500	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7080	3.7503	0.3770	3.6398	0.3021	3.6726	1536.00	3.3885
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	-	5.2970	0.5325	5.1410	0.4268	5.1873	2169.48	4.7874
GB Sterling	0.2666	0.1888	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0805	0.98	409.57	0.9038
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8781	9.9483	-	9.66	0.8012	9.74	4074.48	8.9911
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.0304	1.0304	-	0.0830	1.01	422.00	0.9312
Kuwait Dinar	3.3107	2.3440	12.4162	1.2481	12.05	-	12.16	5065.25	0.9312
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0212	0.1026	0.9911	0.0822	-	418.23	0.9229
Lebanese/1000	0.65	0.4609	2.4416	0.2454	2.3697	0.1966	2.3910	-	2.2067
Egyptian	0.2950	0.2089	1.1065	0.1112	1.0739	0.0891	1.0835	453.17	-

Energy									
Oil	Last	revised	Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	
Brent	17.35	17.35	SA Riyal	0.2866	0.4577	0.16309	0.38344	29.6534	
W. Texa	18.90	18.80	AE Dirham	0.2723	0.46744	0.16654	0.39154	30.281	
Bonny	17.35	17.35	KW Dinar	3.3107	5.8505	2.0247	4.7619	368.189	
Dubai	16.95	16.95	SH Dinar	0.3770	4.5373	1.62232	3.61388	294.985	
UL Gas	190.00	190.00	CY Pound	1.9492	3.3442	1.1911	2.8001	216.606	

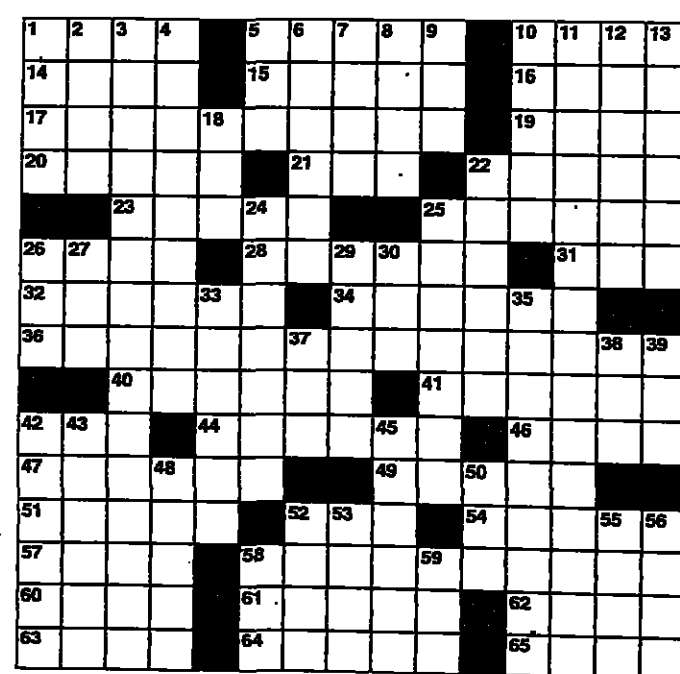
JOD Cross Rates									
Commodity	Last	revised	Delivery	Currency	Buy	Sell			
Coffee (c/bs)	216	-	Spot	US Dollar	0.708	0.710			
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1455	-	Spot	GB Sterling	1.1587	1.1645			
Sugar (\$/ton)	328	-	Spot	DE Mark	0.4127	0.4148			
Wheat (\$/ton)	150.5	-	Spot	CH Franc	0.4923	0.4948			
Soya (c/bs)	22.7	-	Spot	FR Franc	0.1221	0.1227			
Tea (c/bs)	150	-	Spot	JP Yen	0.635	0.6382			
Barley (\$/bsh)	0	-	Spot	NL Guilder	0.3671	0.3689			
Rice (\$/ton)	480	-	Spot	IT Lira	0.4182	0.4203			

Source: Central Bank of Jordan

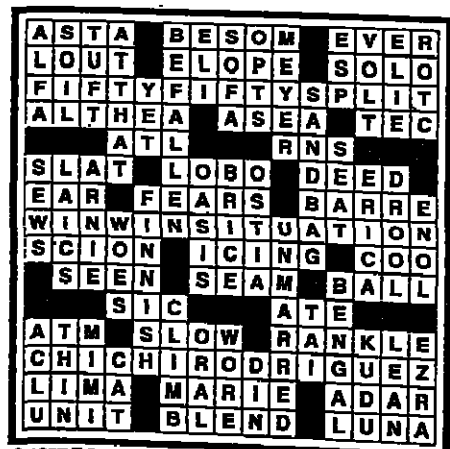
## THE Daily Crossword

## ACROSS

- 1 Start of a request
- 5 Air
- 10 Turkish title
- 14 Concluding response
- 15 Gaze
- 16 Appealed
- 17 Radio, TV, etc.
- 19 Aura
- 20 Senator Specter of PA
- 21 Whiskey
- 22 Gambler
- 23 Rerun of a kind
- 25 Entertainer Matthew
- 26 Great shark movie
- 28 "Cradle of Liberty"
- 31 Attention
- 32 Marked down
- 34 Boatman
- 36 Part of the Rockies
- 40 Groom: var.
- 41 Right — (accurate)
- 42 Hair
- 44 "My Hands" (old song)
- 46 Sicilian mount
- 47 Football team
- 49 — Gras
- 51 More mature
- 52 — Guevara
- 54 "Sing — of sappiness..."
- 57 Author Hunter
- 58 Extraordinary
- 60 Social flop
- 61 Was concerned
- 62 Bern's river
- 63 Clumsy boats
- 64 Swap
- 65 Wales lake or pool
- 6 Sound system
- 7 Lord's spouse
- 8 Great Lake
- 9 Beverage
- 10 Plant pest
- 11 — Park of 25D
- 12 Capital of 25D
- 13 Idolizer
- 18 OH neighbor
- 22 Charitable ones
- 24 G. Gershwin rival
- 25 The Treasure State
- 26 Task
- 27 Cuckoo
- 29 Goal
- 30 China "truth"
- 33 Missive
- 35 Water creature
- 37 Dream phenomenon
- 38 Card game
- 39 Alfonso's queen
- 42 Evening song
- 43 "Twist"
- 45 Foretold
- 48 Sells
- 50 Aries
- 52 Scorch
- 53 Consort of Zeus
- 55 Not any
- 56 Singer Campbell
- 58 Out of each hundred: abbr.
- 59 Pindaric



by Avery P. Bromfield



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## Peanuts



## Andy Capp



## Mutt'n'Jeff



## HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson,  
Astrologer, Carroll  
Righter Foundation

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) Focus your attention on business matters today, and be sure you know what superiors expect from you. Think before you speak or act thereby you won't get into a difficult situation which you could regret.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) A new project requires much more investigation today before you tackle it, as someone involved may be deliberately trying to confuse you. Later this evening will be good for proceeding with a plan of action for your success.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) Double-check your bills and payments today to make sure they are correct. Be more understanding of your mate's moods tonight and thereby make your residence a more harmonious spot to be at this time.

**MOON CHILDREN:** (June 22 to July 21) If any contracts are pending a this time, try to put them off for a few days. Try not to be so short-sighted about ramifications and proceed with your plan of action so that you can be quite successful.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) If you take more time to schedule your daily activities today, you will find that everything goes smoothly. You should not allow an acquaintance to get your dander up or you could find yourself in a difficult situation.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) Don't take any foolish risks today, or you could lose a bundle. If your mate asks you to do a difficult chore, acquiesce cheerfully so that you don't create a difficult situation which you could regret.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) If you walk in on a disagreement at your home don't let anyone involve you until you know the whole story. Check the safety of your property so that you don't get into a difficult situation which can be avoided.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) Be careful that you don't give a fellow business associate the wrong impression or you could regret the situation. Your financial situation will soon change for the better, so be patient and what you anticipated to occur will.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) Be sure that any new projects you have in mind today will not backfire. Listen to your mate's opinions, as he or she has some good ideas which could be beneficial to your career activities and bring about much success.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) Be careful about taking any unsolicited advice from a friend today, as this person is not filled in completely on your situation. Later this evening will be good for seeking fellow associates for advice with career activities.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) You may not understand the actions of your mate today, however you should not be too quick to criticize until you have a chance to check out the facts. This evening you can go to a romantic spot with your mate.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) Stick to a plan you have made concerning a personal goal today, as changing boats in mid-stream is never beneficial to anyone involved. Later this evening will be a good time for recreational activities with close friends.

Birthstone of June:  
Pearl — Moon Stone



## Jordanian, Qatari businessmen agree on joint ventures in tourism and pharmaceutical industry

By Tareq Ayyoub  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanian and Qatari businessmen have agreed to launch joint ventures in Amman and Doha in a bid to strengthen relations between the private sectors in the two countries.

The agreement followed talks between a visiting Qatari trade delegation headed by Sheikh Abdullah Ben Ahmad Al Thani, chairman of Qatar's Chamber of Trade and Industry, and Jordanian businessmen. The two sides focused on launching investments in medicine and tourism sectors.

During meetings with his Jordanian counterparts, Sheikh Abdullah suggested the establishment of a joint businessmen council that would help executives from the two countries to explore investment opportunities in Jordan and Qatar.

Sheikh Abdullah indicated that the Qatari businessmen's visit to Amman was initiated by Prime Minister Abdullah Ben Khalifah Al Thani to strengthen economic ties with the Kingdom and to explore areas of cooperation between the two sides, especially the tourism sector.

The Qatari initiative followed a visit by Jordanian Premier Abdul Salam Majali to Doha last month, where he met with senior Qatari officials and the business community in the Gulf emirate.

Dr. Majali, who was accompanied by Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Mohammed Saleh Hourani, discussed as well exporting Qatari gas through the Kingdom's southern port of Aqaba.

Samir Deeb, head of Al Shaab for Trade and Industry Group and a member of the Qatari delegation, said

that among the joint projects under implementation in Qatar is a \$5 million pharmaceutical factory which has 40 per cent Jordanian capital.

Mr. Deeb added that constructing an \$8 million tourist village in Jordan is under consideration noting that spending is expected to reach \$50 million in the final stages.

He said that more tourist projects will be established in the Dead Sea, Aqaba and Um Qais areas.

Official figures show that trade volume between the two countries reached JD24.5 million in 1996 compared with JD15.5 million in the previous year. The balance of trade was JD11.7 million in 1996 in favour of Jordan compared with JD4.6 million in 1995, also in the Kingdom's favour.

## Trading at AFM drops 73.5%

AMMAN (J.T.) — Lack of foreign interest led to a 73.5 per cent decline in the volume of trade at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) last week.

Brokers at the AFM said that foreign investors and large local investment funds were still waiting for share prices to go down.

The AFM registered JD4.9 million worth of trade through 2,708 contracts and closed at a price index of 159.47 points in comparison to last week's

volume of JD18.5 million and a 160.34 price index.

The average daily trade went down from JD3.7 million to JD1.2 million.

On a sectoral level, industry took 52.7 per cent of the AFM pie with a JD2.6 million volume of trade traded through 903 contracts. The price index closed at 128.08 points.

The banking sector registered a 194.84 point index with JD1.76 million worth of trade through 681 contracts.

The services sector followed with the index rising to 112.48 points as 261 contracts were executed involving JD0.56 million worth of traded shares.

The insurance sector's index declined again this week to 113 as JD14,000 worth of shares were traded in 17 contracts.

After comparing the share prices of 98 companies, those of 30 companies increased, 23 held steady and 45 declined.

## ING Barings proposes holding major conference in New York

AMMAN (J.T.) — Wahib Shair, director general of the Amman Financial Market (AFM), has received a proposal from ING Barings to convene a promotional event in New York to promote Jordan and particularly the Kingdom's stock market.

This proposal comes within the framework of maintaining the momentum of a very active capital investment in Jordanian shares that has been taking

place recently with foreign funds and institutional investors being the major players.

ING Barings attributes the inflow of capital into the Jordanian securities market to two major events which were promoted by the AFM and which triggered the interest of their institutional clients.

The first event was the recent visit by a delegation representing 10 prominent pension funds and portfolio

managers to Jordan last April and the second important event was the Jordan-UBS investment conference held in London in May. The events aimed at introducing international equity investors to investment opportunities in Jordan and specifically its capital market.

Moreover, the proposed New York event which institutional clients from across the USA will be invited to attend, will give Jordan an excellent exposure to global equity investors and to introduce itself as an investment hub of the region capable of attracting foreign capital and enhancing its overall investment climate.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET															
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - 5TH FLOOR															
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179															
ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (07/06/1997 - 13/06/1997)															
WEEKLY REPORT															
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS															
PRICE		COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE PRICE	NO. OF TRADING DAYS	
HIGH	LOW				CONTRACTS	EXECUTED							MARKET PRICE		
241.000	255.000	ARAB BANK	11.7	1.57	31	1420	363065	255.50	256.10	254.00	254.00	-1.50	255.480	4	
2.340	1.790	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	-	0.00	252	153950	318074	2.06	2.15	2.01	2.04	-0.02	2.064	367	4
5.500	5.000	CAIRO AMMAN BANK	11.4	2.73	6	9375	51556	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	-	5.499	094	2
3.170	2.970	BANK OF JORDAN	6.7	0.00	13	30880	94284	3.10	3.19	3.09	3.19	-0.09	3.118	294	4
1.100	0.950	KID. EAST INV. BK.	62.1	0.00	42	29850	28952	0.96	0.98	0.94	0.96	-	0.970	199	4
2.330	2.180	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	8.4	7.49	6	1400	3181	2.28	2.28	2.27	2.27	-0.01	2.272	113	2
5.500	4.770	THE HOUSING BK.	14.6	3.96	52	16171	77576	4.97	5.00	4.90	4.90	-0.07	4.821	065	3
2.980	2.600	JOR. KUNAT BANK	11.4	0.00	99	189284	589585	2.98	3.25	3.05	3.20	-0.22	3.115	1893	4
0.030	0.780	JOR. GULF BANK	5.0	6.33	50	163534	132764	0.80	0.84	0.80	0.84	-0.04	0.812	018	4
2.600	2.400	ARAB JOR. INV. BK.	17.8	0.00	2	5300	59110	2.40	2.70	2.60	2.70	-0.10	2.606	053	1
3.850	3.610	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	14.9	3.29	28	7876	28835	3.73	3.74	3.63	3.70	-0.11	3.641	054	4
1.250	1.140	UNION BK. SAV. INV.	99.1	0.00	27	9400	10600	1.19	1.14	1.12	1.13	-0.06	1.128	085	4
3.280	3.140	JOR. INV. FID. BANK	20.2	0.00	17	2935	9077	3.14	3.15	3.08	3.15	-0.01	3.093	029	4
1.400	1.300	BETH. AL-HAM. (BETHNA)	7	12.76	51	18200	13845	1.21	1.20	1.04	1.09	-0.12	1.074	010	4
1.130	1.050	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	-	0.00	10	8500	9357	1.12	1.11	1.09	1.10	-0.02	1.101	085	3
BANKS SECTOR															
CHANGE 1= 0.441															
2.990	2.850	JORDAN INSURANCE	12.0	5.36	3	1900	5320	2.90	2.80	2.80	2.80	-0.10	2.800	038	1
1.770	1.600	JOR. FIDUCIARY INSUR.	4.8	11.76	6	2650	4505	1.71	1.70	1.70	1.70	-0.01	1.700	120	2
1.850	1.850	TAMMOK INSUR.	9.8	8.11	1	200	370	1.85	1.85	1.85	1.85	-	1.850	020	1
2.200	2.200	WOLY LAMB INSUR.	6.5	0.00	2	236	519	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.20	-0.10	2.199	010	1
1.450	1.450	ARAB LIFE INSUR.	7.2	0.00	1	1000	1850	1.85	1.85	1.85	1.85	-	1.850	050	1
2.660	2.660	MUTUAL-AMALIA INSUR.	17.5	5.02	3	206	575	2.66	2.79	2.79	2.79	-0.13	2.791	016	2
5.750	5.600	ALFARIS AL-ARABI	13.0	0.00	1	100	550	5.75	5.50	5.50	5.50	-0.25	5.500	010	1
INSURANCE SECTOR															
CHANGE 1= 2.087															
1.810	1.650	JOR. ELECTRIC POW.	8.1	5.99	120	55450	92288	1.69	1.69	1.64	1.67	-0.02	1.666	370	4
8.000	8.000	JOR. HOTEL TOURISM	11.5	1.38	2	268	2144	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	-	8.000	005	1
1.280	1.350	FRUIT BASKET CITY	8.2	0.39	3	1032	1345	1.35	1.37	1.37	1.37	-0.02	1.368	034	1
2.640	2.440	KHREZ MINERAL	13.4	5.78	4	224	605	2.44	2.70	2.64	2.70	-0.06	2.677	194	2
7.150	7.150	WHEELS. CAMPER FID.	7.9	4.84	2	372	2678	7.15	7.20	7.20	7.20	-0.05	7.199	042	1
6.100	5.450	ARAB INTL. HOTELS	17.8	3.45	1	1600	9264	5.79	5.79	5.79	5.79	-	5.790	018	1
1.980	1.080	WALL. PORTFOLIO	-	0.00	56	38126	42320	1.28	1.34	1.32	1.33	-0.05	1.317	049	2
0.020	0.490	JORDAN TRAVEL TRAD.	25.7	0.00	19	12350	6561	0.49	0.50	0.48	0.50	-0.01	0.491	393	3
7.000	6.900	ALAM-I	12.5	7.14	1	100	700	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	-	7.000	005	1
5.900	4.800	AD-DUSTOUR	16.7	5.15	3	300	1300	4.80	4.56	4.11	4.11	-0.69	4.333	017	3
1.130	1.270	KID. EAST HOTELS	19.5	0.00	9	3022	3707	1.27	1.28	1.22	1.28	-0.01	1.277	059	3
3.050	2.900	ARAB TRVL. INV. TRD.	7.7	0.00	12	22450	63248	2.90	2.95	2.90	2.95	-0.05	2.906	222	3
1.050	0.970	BAKKA EDUCATION	-	0.00	5	1515	1621	1.09	1.09	1.04	1.04	-0.01	1.070	094	3
1.780	1.650	UNIFIED CO.	7.9	6.43	19	4600	7709	1.68	1.68	1.64	1.64	-0.02	1.676	092	4
0.710	0.650	UNION LAND DEV.	-	0.00	4	2500	1630	0.65	0.66	0.65	0.65	-	0.652	050	2
SERVICES SECTOR															
CHANGE 1= 0.211															
1.030	0.980	ATKINS	-	0.00	5	830	853	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	-	1.028	030	2
4.450	3.780	JOR. TRAVEL FACT.	27.4	2.70	182	158067	649538	3.78	4.10	4.00	4.07	-0.03	4.084	263	4
4.140	3.400	JOR. PROPERTIES MGMT.	11.1	2.50	28	96780	380445	3.40	4.00	3.84	4.00	-0.16	3.931	220	4
7.050	6.750	ARAB POSTAL CO.	15.4	3.03	30	28400	184149	6.75	6.65	6.45	6.60	-0.15	6.555	034	4
10.040	9.270	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	3.4	9.12	32	3348	32583	9.80	10.02	9.70	9.75	-0.05	9.732	052	4
6.000	6.000	JORDAN TRADING	2	0.00	2	60	361	6.00	6.01	6.01	6.01	-	6.009	104	1
1.250	1.050	MOHLE INDUSTRIES	10.9	7.94	4	875	1104	1.25	1.30	1.24	1.26	-0.01	1.244	088	2
2.070	1.900	INDUSTRIAL COMM. AR.	-	0.00	16	4387	8646	1.97	1.98	1.95	1.98	-0.01	1.971	088	4
6.700	6.500	JOR. WORTED HILLS	10.5	3.08	7	1012	6567	6.60	6.50	6.45	6.50	-0.10	6.489	025	2
4.000	3.660	JOR. PHARM. MGMT.	10.8	5.12	74	36754	142282	3.65	3.72	3.77	3.74	-0.06	3.781	408	4
1.040	6.700	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	6.9	2.39	5	2612	17498	6.80	6.70	6.70	6.70	-	6.694	004	1
1.430	1.390	JOR. PAPER MFG.	17.2	5.76	2	195	269	1.40	1.39	1.39	1.39	-0.01	1.379	036	1
1.240	1.200	RAPIA INDUSTRIES	-	0.00	6	1334	1314	1.20	1.17	1.14	1.17	-0.01	1.158	014	3
5.540	4.650	DAR ALDIAH DV. INV.	13.5	4.52	42	44614	244895	5.25	5.56	5.20	5.53	-0.28	5.489	746	4
3.220	3.040	ARAB ALUM. IND.	7.1	8.20	4	500	2529	3.07	3.04	3.05	3.05	-	3.058	008	1
0.530	0.530	ALVOROCK & POLYSTY	10.4	0.00	22	31200	17231	0.53	0.51	0.50	0.51	-0.01	0.504	045	4
3.510	3.510	GENERAL INVESTMENT	7.4	4.07	2	300	1107	3.51	3.69	3.69	3.69	-0.18	3.690	009	1
1.110	1.030	ARAB PAPER CONV. IND.	32.1	0.00	14	4300	4515	1.05	1.05	1.05	1.05	-	1.050	123	3
1.080	1.080	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	-	0.00	1	500	525	1.08	1.05	1.05	1.05	-0.01	1.050	013	1
0.580	0.580	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	-	0.00	10	5650	5650	0.58	0.55	0.54	0.54	-	0.540	094	2
0.760	0.680	ENTRANCE. JORDAN. CHEN.	-	0.00	65	43250	38475	0.68	0.67	0.61	0.63	-0.05	0.627	1334	4
0.440	0.580	JOR. SOCCOMOL IND.	-	0.00	5	1350	792	0.59	0.59	0.58	0.58	-0.01	0.587	045	2
2.020	2.000	UNIV. CAREN. IND.	17.1	5.26	1	150	285	2.00	1.90	1.90	1.90	-0.10	1.900	010	1
3.000	2.680	NATL. CAREN. MTR. NOFAC	42.3	0.00	8	2250	6073	2.73	2.70	2.65	2.70	-0.03	2.659	045	2
0.480	0.580	JOR. SUN. SUPPLY-CHEN	10.4	0.00	82	57050	43184	0.58	0.55	0.53	0.53	-0.01	0.540	118	4
1.560	1.410	ARAB PHARM. CHEN.	18.4	4.86	27	7836	12248	1.43	1.45	1.43	1.44	-0.01	1.435	157	4
1.120	1.120	KAWTHER INVEST.	104.5	0.00	3	400	422	1.12	1.06	1.06	1.06	-0.06	1.052	020	2
1.520	1.410	UNIV. NOON. IND.	531.7	-	67	70000	98174	1.43	1.43	1.39	1.40	-0.03	1.400	140	4
1.200	1.120	JOR. RES. RESOURCES	15.2	8.05	34	12200	13796	1.12	1.14	1.13	1.13	-0.01	1.131	153	4
1.530	1.400	WELL. CHLORIDE	24.0	2.78	25	47493	56132	1.49	1.48	1.47	1.48	-0.01	1.482	000	1
0.560	0.560	WELL. NEW CARM. CO.	15.9	0.00	29	12400	16894	0.87	0.88	0.87	0.87	-	0.871	243	3
1.650	1.510	EL. EAST READY MEAT	54.0	0.00	23	10405	15510	1.57	1.57	1.53	1.54	-0.03	1.544	124	3
0.920	1.130	WELL. TOBACCO	60.3	0.00	27	13345	15373	1.14	1.14	1.15	1.15	-0.01	1.152	133	4
1.270	0.770	UNION CH. & VEG.	4.0	0.00	18	6800	6140	0.90	0.91	0.90	0.90	-	0.902	151	4
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR															
CHANGE 1= 0.757															
1.862	1515993	4003940	INDEX NUMBER	159.47	CHANGE 1= 0.547										
GRAND TOTAL															
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS															
PRICE		COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE PRICE	NO. OF TRADING DAYS	
HIGH	LOW				CONTRACTS	EXECUTED							MARKET PRICE		
4.000	3.800	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	-	0.00	4	1900	685	3.98	3.98	3.95	3.97	-0.02	3.961	058	3
5.330	4.500	JOR. TRADE FAC.	13.6	0.00	79	371900	85245	4.88	5.11	4.88	5.11	-0.03	4.994	4093	4
1.550	0.470	ARAB FID. INVEST.	-	0.00	94	283950	150461	0.52	0.54	0.52	0.52	-	0.520	2.840	4
7.710	6.600	UNION INV. 50%	-	0.00	47	122394	22460	6.68	6.68	6.68	6.68	-	6.684	556	4
1.000	0.830	AL-BANATIR 75%	82.4	0.00	39	23601	9438	0.88	0.89	0.85	0.85	-0.03	0.860	169	3
0.560	0.750	AL-SHARQ INV. 75%	281.7	0.00	30	90417	51356	0.82	0.80	0.80	0.80	-0.02	0.808	000	1
0.560	0.530	ARAB FOOD & MED.	-	0.00	6	880	474	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	-	0.539	025	3
0.470	0.430	ARAB INV. INV. TRD.	49.5	0.00	13	10950	4709	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	-	0.430	219	3
0.250	0.230	JOR. IND. MATCH-CHEN	-	0.00	25										



# NBA fines Rodman \$50,000

CHICAGO (AFP) — Dennis Rodman was fined a record \$50,000 Thursday for an obscene insult of the Mormon community in Utah during the National Basketball Association finals this week.

The fine is the largest in National Basketball Association history, but NBA Commissioner David Stern stopped short of suspending Rodman for the remainder of the finals.

The Chicago Bulls are one victory away from winning the championship series against the Utah Jazz, with Game Six scheduled for Friday night in Chicago.

"I have indicated in previous actions that insensitive or derogatory comments involving race or other classifications are unacceptable in the NBA," Stern said in a statement.

"Dennis Rodman's comments were exactly the kind of offensive remarks that cannot be tolerated or excused," he added.

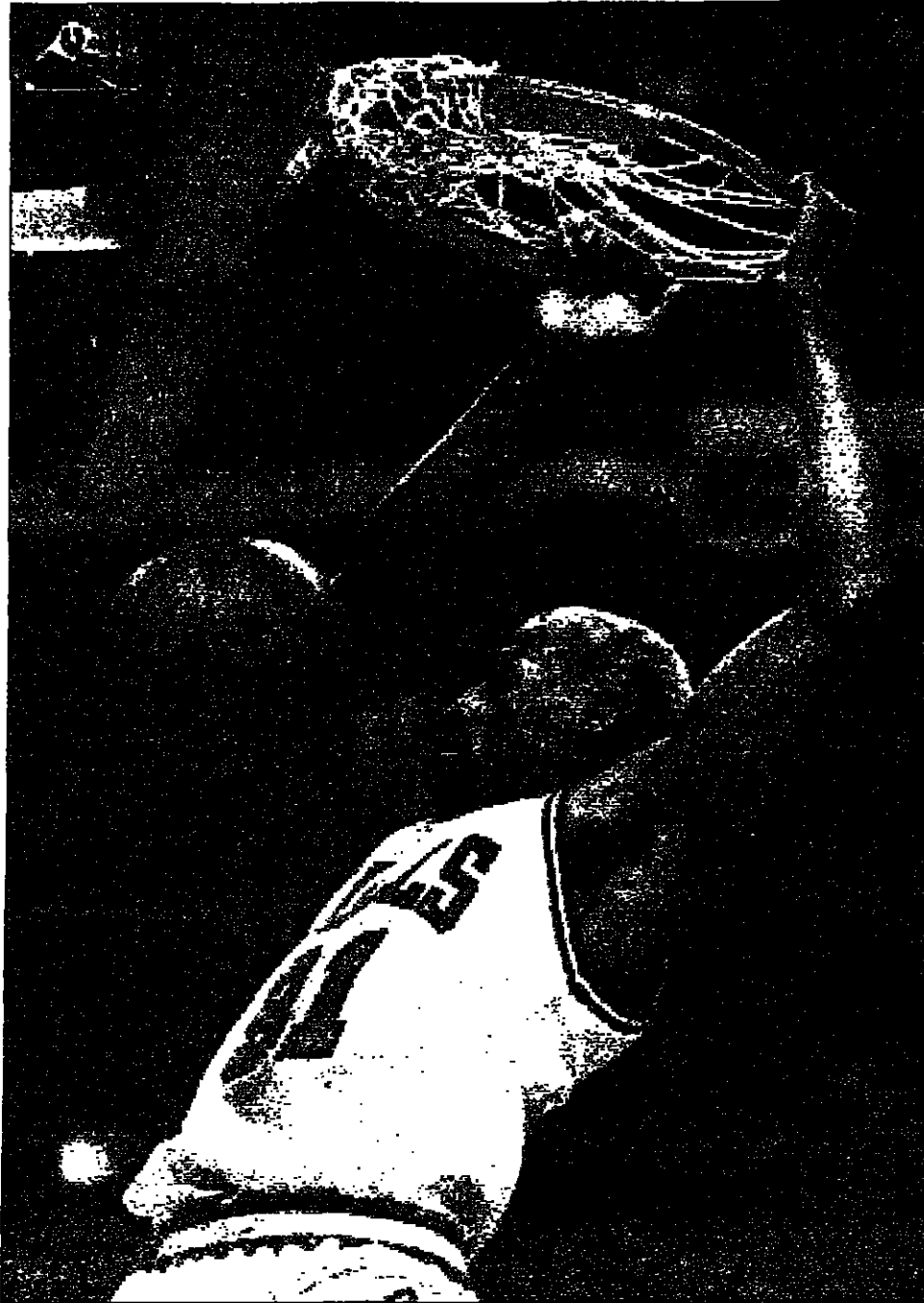
Rodman, who has had a poor finals, blamed "asshole Mormons" for his dismal performance in Game 3 last Friday, the first finals game ever in Utah. Some 70 per cent of the western state's residents belong to the Mormon Church.

The Mormon Church in Utah made no formal complaint, and on Monday Rodman refused to apologise.

But by Thursday, nationwide criticism from the Anti-defamation League and the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People had stung the NBA into action, and he was more contrite.

"As far as religion, it's not about trying to put down anybody's religion... I apologise for that," Rodman said at the team's Deerfield, Illinois, practice facility. "They (NBA) have no reason, no business to even get involved. Like I said, I apologise for the religion."

Bulls coach Phil Jackson



Dennis Rodman

believes the flamboyant forward, famous for his multi-coloured hair, tattoos and cross-dressing publicity stunts, did not intend to disparage the Mormon religion.

"To Dennis, a Mormon may be just a nickname for people from Utah," Jackson said. "I don't know what Dennis even associates with it."

The fine doubles the previous largest fine of \$25,000, levied on three occasions, most recently against New Jersey Nets coach John Calipari this season for racially insensitive remarks toward Mexican sportswriter Dan Garcia.

If the Bulls win on Friday to claim their fifth title in seven years, it will be the

last game of a troubled season for Rodman.

He drew three suspensions that cost him 14 games and over \$1.2 million in fines and lost salary.

The biggest suspension was an 11-game ban Rodman received for kicking a courtside cameraman during a game at Minneapolis on January 15th.

# Tax probe against Steffi Graf dropped

MANNHEIM (AP) — A tax evasion investigation against tennis star Steffi Graf has been officially dropped, the chief investigator for the case told a Mannheim radio station Thursday.

Chief District Attorney Hubert Jobski said Graf, formerly the world's top-ranked player, has agreed to

pay \$ 760,000 to the state and to charitable causes.

There has never been any strong evidence of wrongdoing by Graf.

But Jobski said "if we agree to a dismissal against payment, it does not mean we believe those involved are innocent."

The news came just two days after Graf underwent a

career-threatening operation for a knee injury in a Vienna private clinic.

The investigation grew out of father Peter Graf's Jan. 27 conviction of evading \$7.3 million in taxes on his daughter's earnings from 1989-1993, and attempting to evade paying another \$1.8 million.

The presiding judge at the

trial, Joachim Plass, had recommended the investigation of Steffi Graf be dropped, saying there was no evidence she had played "an active part" in the tax evasion.

But Jobski said at the time the probe of the tennis star would only be put on hold. Peter Graf is appealing his Jan. 27 conviction.

# Graf determined to return soon

BONN (AFP) — German tennis queen Steffi Graf is determined to return to action as soon as possible, despite a catalogue of injury problems which have forced her out of Wimbledon, her surgeon said Thursday.

Graf is undergoing physiotherapy at an Austrian clinic after a knee operation which will sideline her until the end of the year, but the surgeon who operated on her on Tuesday said she wanted "at all costs to play again."

"She can do it, but she will have to be very hard on herself and show a great deal of self-discipline and strength," said Dr. Reinhard Weinstabl, quoted by the Sid news agency.

Weinstabl, who on Wednesday dismissed rumours that Graf was considering retirement, confirmed the 27-year-old German star would be attending the Willy Dungs clinic in Gars am Kamp, 60km northwest of the Austrian capital for further treatment.

Graf, who slipped to third in the WTA Tour rankings after losing in the French Open quarter-finals last week, was forced to have the operation as her kneecap was irritating a tendon.

Earlier in the season, she was out of action for over three months with another knee injury.

Graf said on Wednesday she hoped to be back "in four to six months."



Steffi Graf

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EAST  
♠ 7 3  
♥ Q J 8 4 3  
♦ 10 8  
♣ A Q 10 8 7  
SOUTH  
♠ A K Q 10 9 8  
♥ A K 5  
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The bidding:  
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST  
2♠ Pass 2♠ Pass  
3♠ Pass 3♠ Pass  
4♠ Pass 4♠ Pass  
5♠ Pass 5♠ Pass  
6♠ Pass 6♠ Pass  
Opening lead: Four of ♠.  
Don't be satisfied with the first line that helps at you the moment dummy hits the table. Take a second and third look at your combined assets and see if there isn't another chance as well.  
South's two clubs was artificial and forcing and North's two diamonds and three clubs were both

# Johnson may run in Athens after all

MONACO (R) — Michael Johnson and other injured American athletes may be allowed to defend their titles at the World Championships despite missing the U.S. trials, the International Amateur Athletic Federation said on Thursday.

"The IAAF could consider the possibility of giving them a wild card or invitation," said the governing body's spokesman Giorgio Reineri.

"The IAAF does not want to get involved in the politics of the selection process of the U.S. Federation," Reineri said.

"But given the hypothesis, it could consider the cases of Johnson and other athletes if the U.S. decides to ask the IAAF for something special in extraordinary cir-

cumstances because they could not take part in the trials not for capricious reasons but real physical problems."

Only athletes who finish in the top three at the U.S. Championships are eligible for the American team, according to their selection rules.

The executive committee of USA Track and Field said it might ask the IAAF for wild-card entries for Johnson and other injured American world champions like Decathlete Dan O'Brien and sprinter Gwen Torrence at the Athens Championships in August.

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# Williams opts for hard route in Wimbledon warm-up

LONDON (R) — American prodigy Venus Williams has refused a wild card for the main draw of next week's Wimbledon warm-up event in Eastbourne, preferring to test herself in qualifying.

The 1.83-metres Williams wanted extra grass-court practice ahead of her Wimbledon debut the following week, organisers of the Eastbourne tournament said on Thursday. Organisers had offered the 16-year-old a place in the draw for the \$450,000 main event, which starts on Monday, but she opted to take the hard route through qualifying on Saturday and Sunday. She will need to win three matches to qualify.

The Eastbourne tournament has attracted one of the strongest entries in its history with World No. 2 Monica Seles returning to defend her title.

Her rivals will include new French Open champion Iva Majoli of Croatia, World No. 4 Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic, Spaniard Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and last year's runner-up Mary Joe Fernandez of the United States.

TODAY AT	CINEMA TEL:634144 <b>PHILADELPHIA "1"</b> Diane Keaton, Goldie Hawn & Bette Midler ... in <b>THE FIRST WIVES CLUB</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL:634144 <b>PHILADELPHIA "2"</b> <b>BALTO</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15 <b>DANTE'S PEAK</b> Shows: 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL:699238 <b>PLAZA</b> <b>ANGUS</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 5:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL:677420 <b>CONCORD</b> CONCORD "1" Tom Cruise...in <b>JERRY MAGUIRE</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45 CONCORD "2" Michael Jordan...in <b>SPACEJAM</b> Shows: 3:30, 6:00	Nabil & Hisham's Theatre TEL: 625155  The actors are on annual leave The theatre will reopen July 2, 1997
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## Jordan's 182-member delegation to Pan-Arab Games announced

### 121 athletes to represent Kingdom in 13 events

By Aileen Bannayan  
and Mufeed Hassouneh  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Kingdom's delegation to the 8th Pan-Arab Games has been downsized with the announcement Friday of the 182-strong delegation which will take part in the July 12-27 event in Beirut, Lebanon.

Ministry of Culture and Youth Secretary-General Touqan Obeidat and the chief of the technical committee at the Jordan Olympic Committee (JOC) Sari Hamdan announced at a joint press conference that Jordan's athletes will be competing in 13 of the 20 events at the Games. The organisers will Monday receive the final list of 89 men and 32 women athletes and 61 team managers, coaches and officials.

The latest announcement cuts down the number of athletes and referees in some games and excludes four sports as Jordan had previously announced it would be competing in 17 events.

The preliminary list of the 257-member delegation had included 130 men and 37 women athletes, 64 officials and coaches, and 26 referees.

Twenty events have been set for the Games excluding handball, gymnastics, body building, hockey, diving and water polo for technical and financial reasons.

Jordan dropped participation in fencing, cycling, tennis and volleyball, and the entry form now includes participation in athletics, basketball, karate, swimming, taekwondo, table tennis, boxing, equestrian, soccer, weightlifting, judo, freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling, and shooting. Other events at the Games include golf, yachting and kick-boxing.

Basketball will be the only team sport Jordan's women will take part in. Individual sports are athletics, swimming, taekwondo, equestrian and table tennis.

JOC officials said participation in the largest gathering of Arab youth since the event was last held in Syria in 1992 would cost around JD 92,000.

In order to cut down on cost, each team will arrive in Beirut one day prior to its event and leave following the end of their respective competitions. Each federation will also pay 40 per cent of expenses incurred by the Ministry of Youth.

Obeidat and Hamdan stressed that the technical evaluation of teams took into consideration taking part with a sizeable delegation that would best represent the Kingdom. "Federations were asked to name the most promising athletes and teams with a chance of attaining at least halfway standings in their respective sports," Hamdan said.

Officials also noted the importance of taking part in the Pan-Arab Games which have only been held seven times since 1953.

Hamdan said an evaluation team from the JOC had been in constant contact with participating sports federations and had 24 meetings to evaluate their teams' preparedness.

The delay in finalising the delegation upto one month before the event, and the uncertainty surrounding the athletes and games Jordan is slated to take part in has been criticised by sports officials citing it as a main point hindering serious preparation and displaying a lax attitude towards the biggest Arab sports gathering in years.

Jordan had finished 9th overall in the last Pan-Arab Games in 1992 with 1 gold, 6 silver and 6 bronze medals.

Hosts Syria topped the medals table with 48 points, 31 silver, 37 bronze followed by Egypt and Algeria.

The event was due to be held last year but was postponed after the Israeli bombardment of southern Lebanon.

The eleven countries which have so far confirmed participation are: Syria, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Sudan, Lebanon, Yemen and Jordan.

Lebanese officials last month announced that work was still underway on facilities including the main stadium where the opening ceremony will be held. Venues include facilities in Beirut, Tripoli,

Beqaa, Qafra, Sidon, Ein Sa'ada, and Jounieh.

Lebanese sports officials last month announced that the main sports city cost \$72 million adding that Saudi Arabia and Kuwait had helped in financing the project while pledges from other Arab countries had not been received yet.

Jordan received preliminary approval to host the 9th Pan-Arab Games in 1999 following a meeting of ministers of youth from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and officials from the Arab League and the Arab Sports Federation held on the sidelines of the visit of the ministerial committee of the Council of Arab Ministers of Sports to inspect Lebanon's preparations for the Games.

Then Jordanian Minister of Youth Mohammad Daoudieh noted that hosting the Arab Games will be a privilege for Jordan. It will also be a great chance for serious preparations for the 2000 Sydney Olympics and an opportunity for the Kingdom to improve its existing sports facilities.

The Pan-Arab Games were held in Alexandria 1953, Beirut 1957, Casablanca 1961, Cairo 1965, Damascus 1976, Morocco 1985 and Damascus 1992.

Jordan delegation to the 8th Pan-Arab Games is as follows:

- Official delegation (5): Sari Hamdan head of delegation
- Medical delegation (7)
- Media delegation (4)

The numbers for the 13 sports teams are made up of players, coaches and referees for each sport.

Following are the players names as announced by their respective federations:

- Soccer (29): Yousef Ammouri, Ra'fat Ali, Mutaz Rishch, Isam Mahmoud, Mohammad Abu Daoud, Abdullah Abu Zameh, Munir Hantash, Bassam Khatib, Faisal Ibrahim, Ahmad Abu Nasouh, Adnan Awad, Amjad

Taher, Ja'far Hammad, Hassouneh Sheikh, Jamal Abu Abed, Jiryes Tadros, Subhi Suleiman, Hussein Shanayneh, Walid Abdul Rahman, Jihad Abdul Mune'm, Abdullah Al Shiyab, and Badran Al Shaqran.

- Taekwondo (20): Shadi Abu Taleb, Ali Asmar, Raed Amer, Daoud Matar, Musammad Abulruz, Mohammad Farajah, Hussein Taleh, Ibrahim Kamaal, Zaha Talhouni, Luma Haddad, Aliassar Matar, Ahlam Bino, Nancy Hindi, Lana Fleifel, Fatimah Mahmoud, and Asma Daoud.

- Karate (9): Adel Sharafi, Shadi Najjar, Mohammad Tadros, Fa'eq Ja'fari, Luay Abu Shariha, Na'e'l Oweimer, and Amed Masoud.

- Judo (6): Rami Dasouqi, Osama Rashed, Mousa Khalaf, and Abdullah Abbadi.

- Table tennis (7): Abdul Aziz Rida, Mustafa Rida, Adnan Ofi, Ayman Mkhni, Alia Tufaha. Two more players, Hanadi Tufaha and Lina Majdalawi might also make the team depending on the number of competing countries.

- Wrestling (5): Fahed Notal, Abdul Hakim Abu Sanineh, and Rashdan Nada.

- Athletics (15): Fakhreddin Fuad, Firas Malkawi, Tareq Najjar, Amal Matari and Nada Kassar. The rest of the players will be named following the athletics qualifiers.

- Weightlifting (5): Ahmad Aboudi, Isa Salaj, and Ayed Kawaldeh.

- Shooting (5): Aysar Hiyari, Mohammad Hiyari, Sadeddin Qaissi, and Khaled Naghaway.

- Swimming (11): Amer Wazari, Yazan Khouri, Faris Naser, Andre Khouri, Hala Majaj, Rania Ghosheh, Hiba Naser, and Saman Nassar.

- Basketball (29): players will be named this week

- Equestrian (11): Hani Bisharat, Shireen Rasekh and three others

- Boxing (8): Khalidoun Qamalah, Kamal Ajouri, Amin Awwad, Basel Hindawi, Taher Hijazi, and Mohammad Abu Khadijeh.



Brazilian soccer stars Ronaldo (L) and Romario fool around during a training session at the Santa Cruz stadium on the eve of their inaugural Copa America match. Brazil face Costa Rica tomorrow in their first round match for the South American soccer championship title (Reuters photo)

## Ivanisevic, Sampras through at Queen's

LONDON (R) — Goran Ivanisevic brushed aside the challenge of Britain's Martin Lee at Queen's Club on Thursday and then privately focused his sights on the Wimbledon title he so covets.

The third-seeded Croat left-hander blitzed world No. 500 Lee on an overcast centre court 6-1 7-5 to reach the last eight of the \$700,000 London grass-court championships, showing the composure often lacking in his previous bids to capture the top prize at Wimbledon.

Top seed Pete Sampras had an even easier route to the quarter-finals when his opponent, New Zealand's Brett Steven, withdrew suffering from a stomach bug and handed the world number one a third-round walkover.

Sampras now meets Swede Jonas Bjorkman, who ousted Frenchman Stephane Simon 6-4 7-5. British fourth seed Tim

Henman was sent spinning out of the tournament by world number 105 Jens Knippschild.

The peroxide-haired German thumped Henman 7-6 6-3, then said: "This is my best career win ever."

British hopes are not totally dashed, however.

Greg Rusedski, seeded 16, swept to a 6-3 6-2 victory over Australian Scott Draper, who dispatched second seed Michael Chang in Wednesday's second-round match.

He now meets French Open semifinalist Pat Rafter, who came from a set down to beat former world number one Jim Courier 4-6 6-3 6-3.

Knippschild will be hoping to follow up his best-ever victory with a win over huge-serving Mark Philippoussis in the quarters.

The Australian sixth seed came through safely against Zimbabwean Byron Black 6-3 6-3.

An all-French affair saw Jerome Golmard squeeze past Jean-Philippe Fleurian 2-6 6-1 6-4 and his reward is a quarter-final clash with Ivanisevic.

The Croat is looking the most dangerous in the field here, though.

He came to London nine days ago — the earliest he has ever arrived in Britain to prepare for Wimbledon — and thinks this play has been a success.

"I got here early, played a little football and funned around a little... and now my mood is good," said the Croat whose biggest enemy has often been his own temperament.

"For Wimbledon you have to be mentally right, to stay there for two weeks on grass is very tough."

"But I am not going to say anything about my chances at Wimbledon because in the past I have said too much about it and it has not come true."

## Berasategui to meet Kuerten

BOLOGNA (R) — Top seed Alberto Berasategui won through to the quarter finals of the \$328,000 Bologna International men's clay-court tennis tournament on Thursday, and now meets French Open champion Gustavo Kuerten.

Berasategui, ranked 14 in the world, beat fellow Spaniard Albert Portas 6-2 6-3.

Kuerten, now world No. 15 after being catapulted up from 66 by his French

victory, removed another Spaniard, qualifier Jacobo Diaz, 6-4 6-2.

The 20-year old Brazilian, who is seeded eight here, clocked up his 14th consecutive victory.

Earlier Italian Andrea Gaudenzi had battled for two hours and 20 minutes to secure his quarter-final berth against Franco Squillari of Argentina 4-6 6-4 7-6. Squillari conceded the match only on the 16th point of a third set tie-break.

In another Spain-Brazil duel, second-seeded Felix Mantilla, ranked 16, was driven to three sets by Fernando Meligeni, ranked 75, before closing the match 6-7 7-5 6-2.

Mantilla now faces Ecuador's Nicolas Lapentti while Gaudenzi takes on sixth seed Karim Alami of Morocco. Fellow Moroccan Hicham Arazi, seeded five, will play Italian Marzio Martelli.

By Roufan Nahhas  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Palestine's De La Salle overcame the Jordanian Armed Forces basketball team 91-90 (42-45) Friday in the opening match of the championship named after Pilot Firas Al Ajlouni who fell in the course of duty during the 1967 war.

Held under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Hassan, the two-day event groups four teams: Iraq's Al Karkh, Palestine's De La Salle, Jordan's Al Ahli and the Jordanian Air Force team.

Jordan's Al Ahli and Iraq's Al Karkh met in a late match Friday.

On Saturday players from the four teams will form two mixed teams and play

the final match. The Armed Forces martyrs will be honoured in a special ceremony Saturday.

The Air Force team started the opening match strong and led the score to the astonishment of a dazed De La Salle.

Air Forces' Nasser Alawneh who excelled in rebounding was able to give his team the lead and end the first half 45-42.

The second half witnessed a dramatic ending for the Air Force who played their best against their opponents who regrouped and had accurate 3-pointers.

De La Salle kept the pressure and took a 7-point lead.

The Air Force reduced turnovers and tied 71-71 with ten minutes left.

The Jordanian team, depending on Nasser Alawneh and Issam Haj, kept up scoring open but could not take a commanding lead.

The two teams tied again 73-73 with 8 minutes left. In a fast-paced match, the two teams displayed their best especially after the Air Force team wasted a definite chance to tie in the last 41 seconds.

De La Salle ended this breath taking match 91-90.

Here is a synopsis on the life of Firas Ajlouni: Ajlouni was born in Amman in 1936, and had

his preliminary education in Turkey, Lebanon and Iraq and continued his secondary studies in Amman before joining the Jordanian Air Force.

He was sent on several training courses in which he passed with flying colours in Syria and Great Britain.

He played basketball for

the Jordan Club and captained the Jordanian national team in Morocco in 1961.

Ajlouni fell a martyr when he was hit after landing for fuel following a successful raid.

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**CORRECTION**  
In reference to the Abdul Hamid Sharaf School's Summer Club 1997 advertisement in the June 12-13 edition of the Jordan Times, the ages which may enrol are 6-15. Tel.: 814188

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## Association chiefs withdraw resignations; JPA fails to convene second time quorum

By Amy Henderson  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An already disjointed effort to confront amendments to the Press and Publications Law, introduced last month, appeared to further unravel this week-end.

Presidents of five professional associations withdrew their resignations, originally submitted in late May, to protest the Press and Publications Law, and on Friday, the Jordan Press Association failed, for a second time, to convene a quorum to hold an extraordinary session of its general assembly to discuss the law.

Following a two-hour closed session, presidents of the Jordan Bar Association, the Engineers Association, the Dentists Association, the Medical Association and the Writers Association retracted their resignations following a unanimous decision that they should remain on the 13-member council of professional associations until a meeting on June 21 to discuss several issues currently facing the professional syndicates.

The same date is also the deadline agreed upon earlier by all council members to submit their resignations in protest over the amended Press and Publications Law.

In late May, all 13 presidents took a unified decision to submit their resignations. Only four eventually resigned after the council resolved that members would withhold their resignations until they could settle outstanding legal issues regarding resignation with their councils and to see if the government would discuss or rescind the law before June 21.

In a statement to the press, the council wrote that it took Thursday's decision in response to "the demands of the associations and labour unions ... and a wide audience from the public and to protect the associations from continued and unjustified attacks."

In this respect, the statement said, "the representatives of the various associations will stay in their positions and continue to fulfil their obligations."

Bassam Dajani, head of the Jordan Medical Association, said that the council of presidents wanted to "assume a unified position for a possible oncoming confrontation."

Dr. Dajani said that the meeting later this month will address a host of issues facing the professional associations including salaries for professional government employees and the press law.

"There is also the possibility," he said, "that the story of the legitimacy of the professional associations may become an issue."

The professional associations have been under fire from the government recently for their stand against the Press and Publications Law, and in previous years, for their anti-normalisation position which does not

allow association members to have any contact, personal or professional, with Israelis.

In a recent interview with the Jordan Times, Minister of Interior Nathir Rashid rebuked the professional associations for having "taken over the role of political parties" and "infringed on the powers of the government." Dr. Rashid said that the associations should recall that under the Constitution, only labour unions are allowed to form and operate in Jordan.

In a related development, the Jordan Press Association Friday failed to assemble the quorum required to convene an extraordinary session of the general assembly. Only seven of the association's 128 members eligible to attend made a show at the association's headquarters. The JPA has approximately 450 members.

Yesterday's attempt to convene the general assembly was the second attempt after a failed try last week.

The JPA, the association spearheading the effort to negotiate with the government over the law, itself has been uncertain in its actions. JPA President Seif Sherif said that he was surprised by the low turnout of members for the meeting, but said he regarded it as a positive sign.

"From my point of view," he said, "this is additional support from the general assembly in favour of the council and its declared

position that negotiating with the government is the best way to pursue our rights."

However, a council member who spoke on condition of anonymity said that the general assembly's failure to show bore negative connotations, and said that the issue of the press law and the ensuing row with the government has exposed a political rift within the JPA.

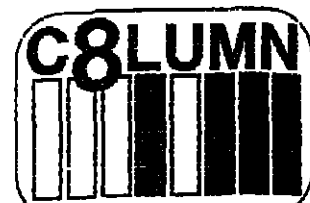
"This meeting was simply for appearances sake" he said. His Majesty King Hussein last week said that "amendments to the law were made after a due study of the situation, we have ratified them, and we are not going back on our signatures and we will not rescind our decision."

"Some journalists first rejected and denied (the law), but now they accept it — they know that the government won't go back," the JPA source said.

The JPA has submitted a memorandum to the government listing its reservations concerning the law and recommendations to soften some of its articles. Mr. Sherif said that he expects to meet with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali "some time next week" to discuss the memorandum. The government has reiterated on several occasions that there would be "no going back" on the law, enacted by Royal Decree as a temporary law, and that it will be left for the next Parliament to amend or reject the law.



FIRST CASUALTY OF PRESS LAW IS SATIRE: The cover page of today's *Abed Rabbo* issue, the last issue of Jordan's only satirical newspaper whose administrators decided to shut down in fear of heavy penalties imposed by the new Press and Publications Law. The headline on the cover page says "His Blood Is Upon You For Ever" referring to the *Abed Rabbo* figure who is depicted with a knife in his neck while his legs go through the word "government" and at the bottom a notice says: "Good wishes accepted at the headquarters of the Prime Ministry." Most weeklies are expected to follow suit shortly (see story on page one)



Sinead O'Connor gets death threat over Jerusalem concert

LONDON (AFP) — A death threat has been made against Irish singer Sinead O'Connor, who is to hold a concert this month in occupied Jerusalem to call for the creation of a Palestinian capital in the city, a press report said Friday. The British embassy in Israel told the Times that the threat — made to one of its staff by an anonymous caller who did not give a motive — was being taken seriously. Israeli and Western intelligence sources believe that the threat was made on behalf of far-right Jews who are opposed to the open-air concert, according to the daily. The June 21 concert comes as the climax to a week of activities by campaigners who want sovereignty of annexed east Jerusalem to be handed back to the Palestinians. The event, sponsored by the European Union, will be held in the Valley of Gehennam at the base of the Old City's walls where the "Green Line" separating the city between west and Arab east Jerusalem once ran. The Palestinians want Jerusalem's eastern sector, captured by Israeli in 1967, as the capital of an independent state. Israel has unilaterally proclaimed the entire city its unified capital.

Venezuelan beauty queen mugged

CARACAS (R) — Two armed men mugged Miss Venezuela, 23-year-old Mariana Bencomo, and stole the watch she won as runner-up in last month's Miss Universe competition, local newspapers reported. They also grabbed a cellular telephone and car keys from Bencomo in Wednesday's attack outside her house in the well-to-do Macaracuay district of eastern Caracas, the reports said. Bencomo was not injured.

Turkish MP with two wives spurns job as women's minister

ANKARA (R) — A Turkish MP with two wives said he had rejected the post of minister for women's affairs after the job offer provoked "bitter criticism," state-run Anatolian news agency reported. "It is not logical to make bitter criticism without knowing me...I do not accept the post. I am very sorry," the agency quoted deputy Salim Ensarioglu as saying. Ensarioglu, from secularist Tansu Ciller's True Path party, is one of two coalition deputies who is known to have more than one wife.

British Muslims hail tomato 'miracle message'

LONDON (R) — British Muslims hailed what was described as a "miracle message" from God written inside a tomato. When schoolgirl Shaista Javed, 14, sliced the tomato in half, she found the message spelled out in Arabic by its veins. British newspapers reported. On one side she read "There is only one God," while the other said "Mohammed is the messenger." Shaista, a Muslim, believes she has witnessed a miracle. "God made me buy that tomato," the Daily Mail quoted her as saying. "These words are a message from God." Since Sunday, when she bought the tomato in the northern city of Huddersfield, word has spread throughout the Muslim community. About 200 people, some from as far as London, have visited the household to see the fruit, wrapped in plastic cling film to keep it fresh. A local shopkeeper said demand for tomatoes had surged.

## Israeli minister boycotts cabinet session after new scandal starts

TEL AVIV (AFP) —

Industry and Trade Minister Nathan Sharansky boycotted the weekly Israeli cabinet meeting Friday to protest Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's treatment of his Russian immigrant-based Israel Ba'aliya Party.

Mr. Sharansky, a former Soviet prisoner of conscience, complains that Mr. Netanyahu has repeatedly failed to consult Israel Ba'aliya on key government decisions in violation of an agreement that brought the party's seven deputies into the ruling coalition, the minister's spokesman said.

Party spokesman Roman Polansky insisted Mr. Sharansky was acting only to protect his party's prerogatives in government. Israel Ba'aliya provides Mr. Netanyahu with his narrow 66-54 seat majority in the 120-member parliament, or Knesset.

Mr. Polansky said Mr. Netanyahu violated his pre-election agreement with Israel Ba'aliya notably by failing to consult the party over the recent appointment of a new ambassador

to Moscow.

Officials in Mr. Netanyahu's office dismissed Mr. Sharansky's complaints and suggested his mini-revolt was above all motivated by the fact that he and other Israel Ba'aliya officials are facing investigation about alleged links to a Russian mobster.

The party's other minister, Yuri Edelstein, reacted furiously to the insinuations.

"If the prime minister does not disavow such rumours, we will no longer have a place in his government," Mr. Edelstein said in a radio interview.

Israeli media reports over the past two weeks have said police plan to question Mr. Sharansky. Mr. Edelstein and other Israel Ba'aliya leaders about their links to Gregory Lerner, a suspected leader of the Russian underworld in Israel.

Lerner, also known as Zvi Ben-Ari, was arrested last month on suspicion of defrauding banks in Israel and Russia of some \$85 million, murdering or attempting to murder

Russian bankers and of trying to fraudulently set up a bank in Israel.

Last week police detained a member of Mr. Netanyahu's Likud Party suspected of accepting money from Lerner to help him gain a foothold in politics. A senior official of the now-opposition Labour Party is also slated to be questioned, according to press reports.

Police have since confirmed that their investigation into Mr. Lerner's criminal activities could involve questioning ministers and members of parliament, but they have declined to release any names.

Mr. Lerner is suspected of having donated large amounts of money to major political parties ahead of May 1996 elections in the apparent hope of obtaining a seat in parliament and possibly in the cabinet. Press reports said Lerner notably contributed \$100,000 to two associations set up to help recent immigrants from the former Soviet Union by Mr. Sharansky.

## Seven suspected Islamic extremists arrested in London

LONDON (AFP) — A total of seven suspected Islamic extremists — five Algerians, a Frenchman and a Tunisian — face court action after they were arrested by anti-terrorist police in London, a police spokesman said Thursday.

Two of the Algerians and the Tunisian are to appear in court in London this month on suspicion of being involved in terrorist offences outside Britain.

Officers arrested Sofiane Kebilene, 30, a student from Algeria, Mohammed Souidi, 33, a self-employed man from Algiers, and Farid Boukemkine, a 26-year-old unemployed man from Tunis, in south east London on May 22, Scotland Yard said. The three men have made two preliminary court appearances in the capital and are due to reappear at Belmarsh magistrates court in south east London on June 30.

At the second appearance on June 2 at Belmarsh all were charged with being concerned in terrorist activities outside Britain, accusations which relate to the discovery of transmitting equipment and certain unspecified chemicals.

The three were also all accused of forgery over the alleged discovery in their possession of a French national identity card, and an Italian passport.

Kebilene was further charged with conspiring to defraud several unnamed British clearing banks.

All three helped in the production and distribution in London of the newsletter *Al-Ansar*, which is linked to the Algerian paramilitary Armed Islamic Group (GIA). *Al-Ansar*'s editor Moustapha Kamel, Alias Abou Hamza, told AFP. He did not deny that some of them might be French passport holders. Also on May 22, four other men were arrested at various locations across South London, Scotland Yard said.

## NATO open to all European democracies now — Albright

WASHINGTON (AFP) —

NATO is open to all European democracies. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said Friday one day after Washington announced the first wave of enlargement should be limited to three countries.

Ms. Albright spoke at the outset of a meeting with Latvian Foreign Minister Valdis Birkavs, whose country is among the east European countries aspiring to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

"The first new members will not be the last," Ms. Albright said. "NATO is open to all European democracies."

The White House announced Thursday that President Bill Clinton had picked the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to be the first new members in NATO, leaving aspirants Romania and Slovenia out in the cold.

NATO leaders are to present the first invitations to new countries at their summit meeting in Madrid on July 8-9 but in recent weeks support for broader expansion had been growing among the 16-member alliance.

In announcing U.S. support for the three countries, the administration also made clear it wants to lay the groundwork for a second wave of enlargement

though no timetable has been set for that effort.

"NATO enlargement will not be complete until the Baltic states are members of the alliance," Mr. Birkavs said.

"We are ready to share the burden of enlargement and common security," he said.

The United States has said the three Baltic countries were not yet ready to join NATO. Russia has made it clear it fiercely opposes the entry of any former Soviet republic in the defence club.

Mr. Birkavs likened the diplomatic rush to join NATO to the Olympic games, saying: "The aim is not to win, but to participate."

## Star of David phobia sweeps Egypt; star seen everywhere

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian

journalists are seeing stars of David everywhere: in the advertising logo of laundry detergent, in the pin-sized holes of a strainer and the sign of a popular Cairo sandwich shop.

For the *Al Arabi* weekly which triggered the alarm and other Egyptian opposition newspapers which have followed suit, these stars of David are a "plot to Judaize" the eyes of the Egyptian people.

A planned operation to Judaize Egyptian eyes is underway, using the dress of a famous singer, a television studio set and a popular laundry detergent, said the Nasserite newspaper *Al Arabi*.

*Al Arabi* journalist Fatma Nimr devoted half a page to the star-spangled "threat."

She denounced singer Safaa Abu Saud for wearing what she said was a dress representing the U.S. and Israeli flags in a performance before President Hosni Mubarak, when in fact the dress was made only of the American flag.

Ms. Nimr, however, was sure of her ground when she lambasted the popular laundry detergent Ariel for using a six-pointed logo which she claimed was none other than the symbol of Zionism which is used on the Israeli flag.

"The star of Zion can be seen everywhere with no shame on several Egyptian shops," Ms. Nimr added.

The head of public relations at U.S. consumer product giant Procter and Gamble, which makes Ariel, was quick to refute Ms. Nimr's link between their "star" and the Jewish one.

"We chose our design 45 years ago. It represents an atom in a bid to show that our detergent powder is like atoms that breaks up dirt with the force of nuclear energy," Mahmud Gobran told AFP.

It is not a Zionist plot. Our company was set up in 1836 and our shares are sold on the stock market all over the world. Our shareholders are Christian, Muslim, Jews or even Zoroastrians," he added.

The manager of the popular Cairo sandwich chain Mu'min, which uses an eight-pointed star design as its logo, also defended himself against the accusations made by *Al Arabi*.

"We're the only ones to close for (Muslim) prayers and we don't even hire Christians," said Sayyed Faruk to underscore his hostility for the star and his respect for Islam.

But Ms. Nimr is undaunted. She has seen the offending star "even in food strainers, traditional lanterns used during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan and house decorations."

A Cairo family even painted the six-pointed geometric figure on its balcony, she said, adding that

when she warned them they had drawn a star of David they were horrified and promised to paint over it.

"Seeing a Zionist emblem in every six-pointed figure is nothing but cultural ignorance," said Mohammad Mohib, a designer of Islamic-style furniture.

"They have adorned churches and mosques alike for centuries," Mr. Mohib said.

"Six-pointed stars spread throughout Islam as it tried to break away from paganism by banning the portrayal of people in mosques, opting instead for geometric figures for decoration," Mr. Mohib said.

"This star has since become a typical element of Islamic architecture and anyone who says otherwise is ignorant," he added.

The first reference to the hexagram known as Magen David (shield of David) was in the early 14th century, according to the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, which said it only became associated with European Jewish communities in the 17th and 18th centuries when it appeared on tombstones, family shields and books.

But it did not become a generally recognised sign for Judaism until the 19th century, when it was adopted by the Zionist movement as its symbol.

## Iraqi businessmen to travel to Syria Friday

BAGHDAD (AFP) — A 32-

strong trade delegation from Iraq is to visit Syria Friday to build on the new rapprochement between the former enemies, the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce said Thursday. The delegation is led by the head of the Iraqi Chambers of Commerce, Zuheir Abdul Ghafour Yunes, and will include businessmen and representatives of the ministries of health, trade and industry.

The Iraqis were invited to Damascus by a Syrian delegation which visited Baghdad in May to break the ice after almost two decades. They will cross the Iraq-Syria border, which had been closed for 15 years until the Syrian visit, and continue discussions on resuming trade between the two neighbours. In a further sign of a thawing of relations, a delegation of Iraqi journalists will visit Damascus Sunday for the first time since relations were severed in 1980 to attend a meeting of the Arab journalists' union.

## Israeli government approves plan to privatise real estate

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's cabinet Friday approved an ambitious plan to privatise huge quantities of real estate and encourage people to move out of the country's crowded central region.

The programme, submitted by Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon, will offer cheap land and building permits to Israelis willing to settle in northern or southern Israel, but maintain restrictions in the central region.

Over 50 per cent of the population live within 25 miles of the centre of Tel Aviv. In the coastal plain, where Tel Aviv is located, there are only 50,000 acres of green countryside left.

"This is an ecological disaster, because the rainwater, instead of seeping into the ground and entering the water-table, runs off the asphalt into the sea," said Sharon's spokesman Raanan Gissin.

"It is also a major security

headache to have the population packed into such a small area," Mr. Gissin told the Associated Press.

Mr. Sharon's plan will encourage high-rise apartment blocks in the central region and prohibit building in the green-belts which still exist between the cities. Low-level building will be permitted on the periphery.

Under the plan, over 700,000 homes leased by their occupants from the Israel lands authority are to be sold to the owners. If they are single-family or semi-detached homes, the occupants will also be allowed to buy the land, and the money they have already paid for the lease will be deducted from the price, Mr. Gissin said.

Over 92 per cent of the land in Israel is owned by the government, and Mr. Sharon's plan is aimed at increasing private ownership.